



HERNANDO DE SOTO

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based on the public domain book
ORIGINAL NARRATIVES OF EARLY AMERICAN HISTORY
The Narrative Of The Expedition Of Hernando De Soto
by Frederick W. Hodge
with edits, notes, images by Larry W Jones**

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Hernando de Soto - INTRODUCTION

In the early annals of the exploration, conquest, and settlement of the territory of the United States none are to be found to which more interest is attached than to the expedition of Hernando de Soto through the Gulf States. In the narrative of the expedition we get our first geographical knowledge of the interior of the states of Florida, Georgia, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas, and the Indian Territory. The Spaniards while on their minor expeditions among the Indians may also have entered the states of Missouri and Louisiana, but of this there is no certainty.

The earliest history of the great Indian tribes or nations residing in the above-named states is related by these narratives, the expedition having traversed the territory of the Timuguas, Cherokees, the various divisions or tribes of the Muskogee or Creek confederacy, the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Quapaws or Arkansas, several branches of the great Pani nation, and some other tribes that are not so easily identified. In the narratives are also to be found the first descriptions of the habits, manners, and customs of the native tribes met with. Their towns, villages, houses, temples, granaries, bridges, canoes, banners, arms, wearing apparel, and culinary implements are also described.

The first published narrative was written by a gentleman from the town of Elvas, in Portugal, who joined the expedition and participated in its trials and privations, and in the weary but memorable march through what was then known as Florida. If he was one of those Portuguese who are named in the book as having started from Elvas, the inference may be drawn from the wording of the narrative that he was named Alvaro Fernandez. His narrative was written after his return from the expedition, and is evidently not based upon a diary, or even field-notes, but seemingly was drawn entirely from memory. His descriptions are somewhat vague, the localities sometimes indefinite, the distances sometimes confused, and there are some palpable errors. The lengthy addresses of the caciques belong to romance rather than to history; at least, they are open to grave suspicion that they were manufactured for the occasion. Nevertheless, when the narrative is considered as a whole, it is decidedly the best full account that has been handed down to us. It records the first discovery and navigation of the Mississippi River, the death of its discoverer, De Soto, the building of the first sea-going vessels—brigantines—by Moscoso, the first voyage down "the great river," and the arrival in Mexico of the remnants of the once powerful expedition. The narrative supplies almost a daily record of the events as they occurred.

CHAPTER 1

Who Soto was, and how he came to get the government of Florida.

Hernando de Soto was the son of an esquire of Xeréz de Badajóz, and went to the Indias of the Ocean Sea, belonging to Castile, at the time Pedrários Dávila was the Governor. He had nothing more than blade and buckler: for his courage and military qualities Pedrários appointed him to be captain of a troop of horse, and he went by his order with Hernando Pizarro to conquer Peru in 1531. According to the report of many persons who were there, he distinguished himself over all the captains and principal personages present, not only at the capture of Atabalípa, lord of Peru, and in subjugation of the City of Cuzco, but at all other places wheresoever he went and found resistance.

Hence, apart from his plundering the treasure of Atabalípa, looting much gold and silver, bringing together in time, from portions falling to his lot, one hundred and eighty thousand cruzados, which he brought with him to Spain in 1536. Of this the Emperor borrowed a part, which was paid; six hundred thousand reales in duties on the silks of Granada, and the rest at the Casa de Contratacion. (**Note** The India House, or Board of Trade, at Seville.)

In Seville, de Soto employed a superintendent of household, an usher, pages, equerry, chamberlain, footmen, and all the other servants requisite for the establishment of a gentleman. Thence he went to Court, and while there was accompanied by Juan de Añasco of Seville, Luis Moscoso de Alvarado, Nuño de Tobár, and Juan Rodriguez Lobillo.

All, except Añasco, came with him from Peru; and each brought fourteen or fifteen thousand cruzados. They went well and costly apparelled; and de Soto, although by nature not profuse, as it was the first time he was to show himself at Court, spent largely, and went about closely attended by those I have named, by his dependents, and by many others who there came about him. He married Doña Ysabel de Bobadilla, daughter of Pedrários Dávila, Count of Puñonrostro. The Emperor made him Governor of the Island of Cuba and Adelantado of Florida, with title of Marquis to a certain part of the territory he should conquer. (**Note** *Isabel de Bobadilla married de Soto in 1537. The Conveyance of Dower, listing all the cattle, slaves and horses of Pedro de Arias, verifies the wealth of Bobadilla's family. It shows how Isabel's marriage to de Soto was a business arrangement between a very powerful Spanish family and an established conquistador.*)

CHAPTER 2

How Cabeça de Vaca arrived at Court, and gave account of the country of Florida; and of the persons who assembled at Seville to accompany Don Hernando de Soto.

After Don Hernando had obtained the concession, a fidalgo (**Note** *equivalent to nobleman, "son of somebody" or "son of some (important family)"*) arrived at Court from the Indias, Cabeça de Vaca by name, who had been in Florida with Narvaez; and he stated how he with four others had escaped, taking the way to New Spain; that the Governor had been lost in the sea, and the rest were all dead.

He brought with him a written relation of adventures, which said in some places: Here I have seen this; and the rest which I saw I leave to confer of with His Majesty: generally, however, he described the poverty of the country, and spoke of the hardships he had undergone. Some of his kinsfolk, desirous of going to the Indias, strongly urged him to tell them whether he had seen any rich country in Florida or not; but he told them that he could not do so; because he and another (by name Orantes, who had remained in New Spain with the purpose of returning into Florida) had sworn not to divulge certain things which they had seen, lest some one might beg the government in advance of them, for which he had come to Spain; nevertheless, he gave them to understand that it was the richest country in the world.

Don Hernando de Soto was desirous that Cabeça de Vaca should go with him, and made him favorable proposals; but after they had come upon terms they disagreed, because the Adelantado would not give the money requisite to pay for a ship that the other had bought.

Baltasar de Gallegos and Cristóbal de Espindola told Cabeça de Vaca, their kinsman, that as they had made up their minds to go to Florida, in consequence of what he had told them, they besought him to counsel them; to which he replied, that the reason he did not go was because he hoped to receive another government, being reluctant to march under the standard of another; that he had himself come to solicit the conquest of Florida, and though he found it had already been granted to Don Hernando de Soto, yet, on account of his oath, he could not divulge what they desired to know; nevertheless, he would advise them to sell their estates and go—that in so doing they would act wisely.

As soon as Cabeça de Vaca had an opportunity he spoke with the Emperor; and gave him an account of all that he had gone through with, seen, and could by any means ascertain. Of this relation, made by word of mouth, the Marquis of Astorga was informed. He determined at once to send his brother, Don Antonio Osorio; and with him Francisco and Garcia Osorio, two of his kinsmen, also made ready to go. Don Antonio disposed of sixty thousand reales income that he received of the Catholic Church, and Francisco of a village of vassals he owned in Campos.

They joined the Adelantado at Seville, as did also Nuño de Tobár, Luis de Moscoso, and Juan Rodriguez Lobillo. Moscoso took two brothers; there went likewise Don Carlos, who had married the Governor's niece, and he carried her with him. From Badajóz went Pedro Calderon, and three kinsmen of the Adelantado: Arias Tinoco, Alonso Romo, and Diego Tinoco.

As Luis de Moscoso passed through Elvas, André de Vasconcelos spoke with him, and requested him to speak to Don Hernando de Soto in his behalf; and he gave him warrants, issued by the Marquis of Vilareal, conferring on him the captaincy of Ceuta, that he might show them; which when the Adelantado saw, and had informed himself of who he was, he wrote to him that he would favor him in and through all, and would give him a command in Florida.

From Elvas went André de Vasconcelos, Fernan Pegado, Antonio Martinez Segurado, Men Royz Pereyra, Joam Cordeiro, Estevan Pegado, Bento Fernandez, Alvaro Fernandez; and from Salamanca, Jaen, Valencia, Albuquerque, and other parts of Spain, assembled many persons of noble extraction in Seville; so much so that many men of good condition, who had sold their lands, remained behind in Sanlúcar for want of shipping, when for known countries and rich it was usual to lack men: and the cause of this was what Cabeça de Vaca had told the Emperor, and given persons to understand who conversed with him respecting that country. He went for Governor to Rio de la Plata, but his kinsmen followed de Soto.

Baltasar de Gallegos received the appointment of chief castellan, and took with him his wife. He sold houses, vineyards, a rent of wheat, and ninety geiras of olive-field in the Xarafe of Seville. There went also many other persons of mark. The offices, being desired of many, were sought through powerful influence: the place of factor was held by Antonio de Biedma, that of comptroller by Juan de Añasco, and that of treasurer by Juan Gaytan, nephew of the Cardinal of Ciguenza.

CHAPTER 3

How the Portuguese went to Seville and thence to Sanlúcar; and how the captains were appointed over the ships, and the people distributed among them.

The Portuguese left Elvas the 15th day of January, and came to Seville on the vespers of Saint Sebastian. They went to the residence of the Governor; and entering the court, over which were some galleries in which he stood, he came down and met them at the foot of the stairs, whence they returned with him; and he ordered chairs to be brought, in which they might be seated.

André de Vasconcelos told him who he was, and who the others were; that they had all come to go with him, and aid in his enterprise. The Adelantado thanked him, and appeared well pleased with their coming and proffer. The table being already laid, he invited them to sit down; and while at dinner, he directed his major-domo to find lodgings for them near his house.

From Seville the Governor went to Sanlúcar, with all the people that were to go. He commanded a muster to be made, to which the Portuguese turned out in polished armor, and the Castilians very showily, in silk over silk, pinked and slashed. As such luxury did not appear to him becoming on such occasion, he ordered a review to be called for the next day, when every man should appear with his arms; to which the Portuguese came as at first; and the Governor set them in order near the standard borne by his ensign.

The greater number of the Castilians were in very sorry and rusty shirts of mail; all wore steel caps or helmets, but had very poor lances. Some of them sought to get among the Portuguese.

Those that de Soto liked and accepted of were passed, counted, and enlisted; six hundred men in all followed him to Florida.

He had bought seven ships; and the necessary subsistence was already on board. He appointed captains, delivering to each of them his ship, with a roll of the people he was to take with him.



CHAPTER 4

How the Adelantado with his people left Spain, going to the Canary Islands, and afterward arrived in the Antillas.

In the month of April, of the year 1538, the Adelantado delivered the vessels to their several captains, took for himself a new ship, fast of sail, and gave another to André de Vasconcelos, in which the Portuguese were to go. He passed over the bar of Sanlúcar on Sunday, the morning of Saint Lazarus, with great festivity, commanding the trumpets to be sounded and many charges of artillery to be fired. With a favorable wind he sailed four days, when it lulled, the calms continuing for eight days, with such rolling sea that the ships made no headway.

The fifteenth day after our departure we came to Gomera, one of the Canaries, on Easter Sunday, in the morning. The Governor of the Island was apparelled all in white, cloak, jerkin, hose, shoes, and cap, so that he looked like a governor of Gypsies. He received the Adelantado with much pleasure, lodging him well and the rest with him gratuitously. To Doña Ysabel he gave a natural daughter of his to be her waiting-maid. For our money we got abundant provision of bread, wine, and meats, bringing off with us what was needful for the ships. Sunday following, eight days after arrival, we took our departure.

On Pentecost we came into the harbor of the city of Santiago, in Cuba of the Antillas. Directly a gentleman of the town sent to the seaside a splendid roan horse, well caparisoned, for the Governor to mount, and a mule for his wife; and all the horsemen and footmen in town at the time came out to receive him at the landing. He was well lodged, attentively visited and served by all the citizens. Quarters were furnished to every one without cost. Those who wished to go into the country were divided among the farm-houses, into squads of four and six persons, according to the several ability of the owners, who provided them with food.

CHAPTER 5

Of the inhabitants there are in the city of Santiago and other towns of the island,—the character of the soil and of the fruit.

The city of Santiago consists of about eighty spacious and well-contrived dwellings. Some are built of stone and lime, covered with tiles: the greater part have the sides of board and the roofs of dried grass. There are extensive country seats, and on them many trees, which differ from those of Spain. The fig-tree bears fruit as big as the fist, yellow within and of little flavor: another tree with a delicious fruit, called anane, is of the shape and size of a small pine-apple, the skin of which being taken off, the pulp appears like a piece of curd. On the farms about in the country are other larger pines, of very agreeable and high flavor, produced on low trees that look like the aloe. Another tree yields a fruit called mamei, the size of a peach, by the islanders more esteemed than any other in the country.

The guayaba is in the form of a filbert, and is the size of a fig. There is a tree, which is a stalk without any branch, the height of a lance, each leaf the length of a javelin, the fruit of the size and form of a cucumber, the bunch having twenty or thirty of them, with which the tree goes on bending down more and more as they grow: they are called plantanos in that country, are of good flavor, and will ripen after they are gathered, although they are better when they mature on the tree. The stalks yield fruit but once, when they are cut down, and others, which spring up at the butt, bear in the coming year. There is another fruit called batata, the subsistence of a multitude of people, principally slaves, and now grows in the island of Terceira, belonging to this kingdom of Portugal. It is produced in the earth, and looks like the ynhamé, with nearly the taste of chestnut.

The bread of the country is made from a root that looks like the batata, the stalk of which is like alder. The ground for planting is prepared in hillocks; into each are laid four or five stalks, and a year and a half after they have been set the crop is fit to be dug. Should any one, mistaking the root for batata, eat any of it, he is in imminent danger; as experience has shown, in the case of a soldier, who died instantly from swallowing a very little. The roots being peeled and crushed, they are squeezed in a sort of press; the juice that flows has an offensive smell; the bread is of little taste and less nourishment. The fruit from Spain are figs and oranges, which are produced the year round, the soil being very rich and fertile.

There are numerous cattle and horses in the country, which find fresh grass at all seasons. From the many wild cows and hogs, the inhabitants everywhere are abundantly supplied with meat. Out of the towns are many fruits wild over the country; and, as it sometimes happens, when an islander misses his way and is lost for fifteen or twenty days, because of the many paths through the thick woods made by the herds traversing to and fro, he will live on fruit and on wild cabbage, there being many and large palm-trees everywhere which yield nothing else available beside.

The island of Cuba is three hundred leagues long from east to southeast, and in places thirty, in others forty leagues from north to south. There are six towns of Catholics, which are Santiago, Baracoa, the Báýamo, Puerto Principe, Sancti Spiritus, and Havana. They each have between thirty and forty householders, except Santiago and Havana, which have some seventy or eighty dwellings apiece. The towns have all a priest to hear confession, and a church in which to say mass. In Santiago is a monastery of the order of Saint Francis; it has few friars, though well supported by tithes, as the country is rich. The Catholic Church of Santiago is endowed, has a cura, a prebend, and many priests, as it is the church of the city which is the metropolis.

Although the earth contains much gold, there are few slaves to seek it, many having destroyed themselves because of the hard usage they receive from the Catholics in the mines. The overseer of Vasco Porcallo, a resident of the island, having understood that his slaves intended to hang themselves, went with a cudgel (club) in his hand and waited for them in the place at which they were to meet, where he told them that they could do nothing, nor think of any thing, that he did not know beforehand; that he had come to hang himself with them, to the end that if he gave them a bad life in this world, a worse would he give them in that to come. This caused them to alter their purpose and return to obedience.



CHAPTER 6

How the Governor sent Doña Ysabel with the ships from Santiago to Havana, while he with some of the men went thither by land.

The Governor sent Don Carlos with the ships, in company with Doña Ysabel, to tarry for him at Havana, a port in the eastern end of the island, one hundred and eighty leagues from Santiago. He and those that remained, having bought horses, set out on their journey, and at the end of twenty-five leagues came to Báyamo, the first town. They were lodged, as they arrived, in parties of four and six, where their food was given to them; and nothing was paid for any other thing than maize for the beasts; because the Governor at each town assessed tax on the tribute paid, and the labor done, by the Indians.

A deep river runs near Báyamo, larger than the Guadiana, called Tanto. The monstrous alligators do harm in it sometimes to the Indians and animals in the crossing. In all the country there are no wolves, foxes, bears, lions, nor tigers: there are dogs in the woods, which have run wild from the houses, that feed upon the swine: there are snakes, the size of a man's thigh, and even bigger; but they are very sluggish and do no kind of injury. From that town to Puerto Principe there are fifty leagues. The roads throughout the island are made by cutting out the undergrowth, which if neglected to be gone over, though only for a single year, the shrubs spring up in such manner that the ways disappear; and so numerous likewise are the paths made by cattle, that no one can travel without an Indian of the country for a guide, there being everywhere high and thick woods.

From Puerto Principe the Governor went by sea in a canoe to the estate of Vasco Porcallo, near the coast, to get news of Doña Ysabel, who, at the time, although not then known, was in a situation of distress, the ships having parted company, two of them being driven in sight of the coast of Florida, and all on board were suffering for lack of water and subsistence. The storm over, and the vessels come together, not knowing where they had been tossed, Cape San Antonio was described, an uninhabited part of the island, where they got water; and at the end of forty days from the time of leaving Santiago, they arrived at Havana. The Governor presently received the news and hastened to meet Doña Ysabel. The troops that went by land, one hundred and fifty mounted men in number, not to be burdensome upon the islanders, were divided into two squadrons, and marched to Sancti Spiritus, sixty leagues from Puerto Principe.

The victuals they carried was the caçabe bread I have spoken of, the nature of which is such that it directly dissolves from moisture; whence it happened that some ate meat and no bread for many days. They took dogs with them, and a man of the country, who hunted as they journeyed, and who killed the hogs at night found further necessary for provision where they stopped; so that they had abundant supply, both of beef and pork. They found immense annoyance from mosquitos, particularly in a lake called Bog of Pia, which they had much ado in crossing between mid-day and dark, it being more than half a league over, full half a bow-shot of the distance swimming, and all the rest of the way the water waist deep, having clams on the bottom that sorely cut the feet, for not a boot nor shoe sole was left entire at half way. The clothing and saddles were floated over in baskets of palm-leaf. In this time the insects came in great numbers and settled on the person where exposed, their bite raising lumps that smarted keenly, a single blow with the hand sufficing to kill so many that the blood would run over the arms and body. There was little rest at night, as happened also afterwards at like seasons and places.

They came to Sancti Spiritus, a town of thirty houses, near which passes a little river. The grounds are very fertile and pleasant, abundant in good oranges, citrons, and native fruit. Here one half the people were lodged; the other half went on twenty-five leagues farther, to a town of fifteen or twenty householders, called Trinidad. There is a hospital for the poor, the only one in the island. They say the town was once the largest of any; and that before the Catholics came into the country a ship sailing along the coast had in her a very sick man, who begged to be set on shore, which the captain directly ordered, and the vessel kept on her way. The inhabitants, finding him where he had been left, on that shore which had never yet been hunted up by Spainards carried him home, and took care of him until he was well. The chief of the town gave him a daughter; and being at war with the country round about, through the prowess and exertion of the Catholic he subdued and reduced to his control all the people of Cuba. From Trinidad they travelled to Havana in the end of March. They found the Governor there, and the rest of the people who had come with him from Spain. He sent Juan de Añasco in a caravel, with two pinnaces and fifty men, to explore the harbor in Florida. In consequence, they reported that there was much gold in Florida. The Governor and all the company were greatly rejoiced, and longed for the hour of departure—that land appearing to them to be the richest of any which until then had been discovered.

CHAPTER 7

How we left Havana and came to Florida, and what other matters took place.

Before our departure, the Governor deprived Nuño de Tobár of the rank of captain-general, and conferred it on a resident of Cuba, Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa, which caused the vessels to be well provisioned, he giving a great many hogs and loads of caçabe bread. That was done because Nuño de Tobár had made love to Doña Ysabel's waiting-maid, daughter of the Governor of Gomera; and though he had lost his place, yet, to return to Soto's favor, for she was with child by him, he took her to wife and went to Florida. Doña Ysabel remained, and with her the wife of Don Carlos, of Baltasar de Gallegos, and of Nuño de Tobár. The Governor left, as his lieutenant over the island, Juan de Rojas, a fidalgo of Havana.

On Sunday, the 18th day of May, in the year 1539, the Adelantado sailed from Havana with a fleet of nine vessels, five of them ships, two caravels, two pinnaces; and he ran seven days with favorable weather. On the 25th of the month, being the festival of Espiritu Santo, (Whitsunday; Pentecost) the land was seen, and anchor cast a league from shore, because of the shoals. On Friday, the 30th, the army landed in Florida, two leagues from the town (**Note** *Ucita or Oçita. This first town was on the point at the mouth of Charlotte Harbor, Florida.*) of an Indian chief named Ucita. Two hundred and thirteen horses were set on shore, to unburden the ships, that they should draw the less water; the seamen only remained on board, who going up every day a little with the tide, the end of eight days brought them near to the town.

So soon as the people were come to land, the camp was pitched on the seaside, nigh the bay, which goes up close to the town. Presently the captain-general, Vasco Porcallo, taking seven horsemen with him, beat up the country half a league about, and discovered six Indians, who tried to resist him with arrows, the weapons they are accustomed to use. The horsemen killed two, and the four others escaped, the country being obstructed by bushes and ponds, in which the horses bogged and fell, with their riders, of weakness from the voyage. At night the Governor, with a hundred men in the pinnaces, came upon a deserted town; for, so soon as the Catholics appeared in sight of land, they were descried, and all along on the coast many smokes were seen to rise, which the Indians make to warn one another. The next day, Luis de Moscoso, master of the camp, set the men in order.

The horsemen he put in three squadrons—the vanguard, battalion, and rearward; and thus they marched that day and the next, compassing great creeks which run up from the bay; and on the first of June, being Trinity Sunday, they arrived at the town of Ucita, where the Governor tarried.

The town was of seven or eight houses, built of timber, and covered with palm-leaves. The chief's house stood near the beach, upon a very high mount made by hand for defence; at the other end of the town was a temple, on the top of which perched a wooden fowl with gilded eyes, and within were found some pearls of small value, injured by fire, such as the Indians pierce for beads, much esteeming them, and string to wear about the neck and wrists.

The Governor lodged in the house of the chief, and with him Vasco Porcallo and Luis de Moscoso; in other houses, midway in the town, was lodged the chief castellan, Baltasar de Gallegos, where were set apart the provisions brought in the vessels. The rest of the dwellings, with the temple, were thrown down, and every mess of three or four soldiers made a cabin, wherein they lodged. The ground about was very fenny, and encumbered with dense thicket and high trees.

The Governor ordered the woods to be felled the distance of a crossbow-shot around the place, that the horses might run, and the Spainards have the advantage, should the Indians make an attack at night. In the paths, and at proper points, sentinels of foot-soldiers were set in couples, who watched by turns; the horsemen, going the rounds, were ready to support them should there be an alarm.

The Governor made four captains of horsemen and two of footmen: those of the horse were André de Vasconcelos, Pedro Calderon of Badajóz, and the two Cardeñosas his kinsmen (Arias Tinoco and Alfonso Romo), also natives of Badajóz; those of the foot were Francisco Maldonado of Salamanca, and Juan Rodriguez Lobillo.

While we were in this town of Ucita, the Indians which Juan de Añasco had taken on that coast, and were with the Governor as guides and interpreters, through the carelessness of two men who had charge of them, got away one night. For this the Governor felt very sorry, as did every one else; for some excursions had already been made, and no Indians could be taken, the country being of very high and thick woods, and in many places marshy.

CHAPTER 8

Of some inroads that were made, and how a Spainard was found who had been a long time in the possession of a Cacique.

From the town of Ucita the Governor sent the chief castellan, Baltasar de Gallegos, into the country, with forty horsemen and eighty footmen, to procure an Indian if possible. In another direction he also sent, for the same purpose, Captain Juan Rodriguez Lobillo, with fifty infantry: the greater part were of sword and buckler; the remainder were crossbow and gun men. The command of Lobillo marched over a swampy land, where horses could not travel; and, half a league from camp, came upon some huts near a river. The people in them plunged into the water; nevertheless, four women were secured; and twenty warriors, who attacked our people, so pressed us that we were forced to retire into camp.

The Indians are exceedingly ready with their weapons, and so warlike and nimble, that they have no fear of footmen; for if these charge them they flee, and when they turn their backs they are presently upon them. They avoid nothing more easily than the flight of an arrow. They never remain quiet, but are continually running, traversing from place to place, so that neither crossbow nor arquebuse can be aimed at them. Before a Spainard can make a single shot with either, an Indian will discharge three or four arrows; and he seldom misses of his object. Where the arrow meets with no armor, it pierces as deeply as the shaft from a crossbow. Their bows are very perfect; the arrows are made of certain canes, like reeds, very heavy, and so stiff that one of them, when sharpened, will pass through a target. Some are pointed with the bone of a fish, sharp and like a chisel; others with some stone like a point of diamond: of such the greater number, when they strike upon armor, break at the place the parts are put together; those of cane split, and will enter a shirt of mail, doing more injury than when armed.

Juan Rodriguez Lobillo got back to camp with six men wounded, of whom one died, and he brought with him the four women taken in the huts, or cabins. When Baltasar de Gallegos came into the open field, he discovered ten or eleven Indians, among whom was a Spainard, naked and sun-burnt, his arms tattooed after their manner, and he in no respect differing from them. As soon as the horsemen came in sight, they ran upon the Indians, who fled, hiding themselves in a thicket, though not before two or three of them were overtaken and wounded. The Spainard, seeing a horseman coming upon him with

a lance, began to cry out: "Do not kill me, cavalier; I am a Catholic! Do not slay these people; they have given me my life!" Directly he called to the Indians, putting them out of fear, when they left the wood and came to him. The horsemen took up the Spainard and Indians behind them on their beasts, and, greatly rejoicing, got back to the Governor at nightfall. When he and the rest who had remained in camp heard the news, they were no less pleased than the others.



DE SOTO LANDS IN FLORIDA

CHAPTER 9

How the Spainard came to the land of Florida, who he was, and of what passed at his interview with the Governor.

The name of the Spainard was Juan Ortiz, a native of Seville, and of noble parentage. He had been twelve years among the Indians, having gone into the country with Pánphilo de Narvaez, and returned in the ships to the island of Cuba, where the wife of the Governor remained; whence, by her command, he went back to Florida, with some twenty or thirty others, in a pinnace; and coming to the port in sight of the town, they saw a cane sticking upright in the ground, with a split in the top, holding a letter, which they supposed the Governor had left there, to give information of himself before marching into the interior. They asked it, to be given to them, of four or five Indians walking along the beach, who, by signs, bade them come to land for it, which Ortiz and another did, though contrary to the wishes of the others. No sooner had they got on shore, when many natives came out of the houses, and, drawing near, held them in such way that they could not escape. One, who would have defended himself, they slew on the spot; the other they seized by the hands, and took him to Ucita, their chief. The people in the pinnace, unwilling to land, kept along the coast and returned to Cuba.

By command of Ucita, Juan Ortiz was bound hand and foot to four stakes, and laid upon scaffolding, beneath which a fire was kindled, that he might be burned; but a daughter of the chief entreated that he might be spared. She said though he might do no good, certainly he could do no harm, and it would be an honor to have one for a captive; to which the father acceded, directing the injuries to be healed. When Ortiz got well, he was put to watching a temple, that the wolves, in the night-time, might not carry off the dead there. One night they snatched away from him the body of a little child, son of a principal man; and, going after them, he threw a dart at the wolf that was escaping, which, feeling itself wounded, let go its hold, and went off to die; and he returned, without knowing what he had done in the dark. In the morning, finding the body of the little boy gone, he became very sober; and Ucita, when he heard what had happened, determined he should be killed; but having sent on the trail which Ortiz pointed out as that the wolves had made, the body of the child was found, and a little farther on a dead wolf; at which circumstance the chief became well pleased with the Spainard, and satisfied with the guard he had kept, ever after taking much notice of him.



Juan Ortiz was almost roasted alive

Three years having gone by since he had fallen into the hands of this chief, there came another, named Mocoço, living two days' journey distant from that port, and burnt the town, when Ucita fled to one he had in another sea-port, whereby Ortiz lost his occupation, and with it the favor of his master. The Indians are worshippers of the Devil, and it is their custom to make sacrifices of the blood and bodies of their people, or of those of any other they can come by; and they affirm, too, that when he would have them make an offering, he speaks, telling them that he is athirst, and that they must sacrifice to him.

The girl who had delivered Ortiz from the fire, told him how her father had the mind to sacrifice him the next day, and that he must flee to Mocoço, who she knew would receive him with regard, as she had heard that he had asked for him, and said he would like to see him: and as he knew not the way, she went half a league out of town with him at dark, to put him on the road, returning early so as not to be missed.

Ortiz travelled all night, and in the morning came to a river, the boundary of the territory of Mocoço, where he discovered two men fishing. As this people were at war with those of Ucita, and their languages different, he did not know how he should be able to tell them who he was, and why he came, or make other explanation, that they might not kill him as one of the enemy. It was not, however, until he had come up to where their arms were placed that he was discovered, when they fled towards the town; and though he called out to them to wait, that he would do them no injury, they only ran the faster for not understanding him.

As they arrived, shouting, many Indians came out of the town, and began surrounding, in order to shoot him with their arrows, when he, finding himself pressed, took shelter behind trees, crying aloud that he was a Spainard fled from Ucita, come to visit and serve Mocoço. At the moment, an Indian came up, who, speaking the language, understood him and quieted the others, telling them what was said. Three or four ran to carry the news, when the cacique, much gratified, came a quarter of a league on the way to receive him.

He caused the Spainard immediately to swear to him, according to the custom of his country, that he would not leave him for any other master; and, in return, he promised to show him much honor, and if at any time Catholics should come to that land, he would let him go freely, and give him his permission to return to them, pledging his oath to this after the Indian usage.

Three years from that time, some people fishing out at sea, three leagues from land, brought news of having seen ships; when Mocoço, calling Ortiz, gave him permission to depart, who, taking leave, made all haste possible to the shore, where, finding no vessels, he supposed the story to be only a device of the cacique to discover his inclination.

In this way he remained with him nine years, having little hope of ever seeing Spainards more; but no sooner had the arrival of the Governor in Florida taken place, when it was known to Mocoço, who directly told Ortiz that Catholics were in the town of Ucita. The captive, thinking himself jested with, as he had supposed himself to be before, said that his thoughts no longer dwelt on his people, and that his only wish now was to serve him. Still the cacique assured him that it was even as he stated, and gave him leave to go, telling him that if he did not, and the Catholics should depart, he must not blame him, for he had fulfilled his promise.

Great was the joy of Ortiz at this news, though still doubtful of its truth; however, he thanked Mocoço, and went his way. A dozen principal Indians were sent to accompany him; and on their way to the port, they met Baltasar de Gallegos, in the manner that has been related. Arrived at the camp, the Governor ordered that apparel be given to him, good armor, and a fine horse.

When asked if he knew of any country where there was either gold or silver, he said that he had not been ten leagues in any direction from where he lived; but that thirty leagues distant was a chief named Paracoxi, to whom Mocoço, Ucita, and all they that dwelt along the coast paid tribute, and that he perhaps had knowledge of some good country, as his land was better than theirs, being more fertile, abounding in maize.

Hearing this, the Governor was well pleased, and said he only desired to find subsistence, that he might be enabled to go inland with safety; for that Florida was so wide, in some part or other of it, there could not fail to be a rich country. The cacique of Mocoço came to the port, and calling on the Governor, he thus spoke:

Most High and Powerful Chief:

Though less able, I believe, to serve you than the least of these under your control, but with the wish to do more than even the greatest of them can accomplish, I appear before you in the full confidence of receiving your favor, as much so as though I deserved it, not in requital of the trifling service I rendered in setting free the Spainard while he was in my power, which I did, not for the sake of my honor and of my promise, but because I hold that great men should be liberal. As much as in your bodily perfections you exceed all, and in your command over fine men are you superior to others, so in your nature are you equal to the full enjoyment of earthly things. The favor I hope for, great Lord, is that you will hold me to be your own, calling on me freely to do whatever may be your wish.

The Governor answered him, that although it were true, in freeing and sending him the Spainard, he had done no more than to keep his word and preserve his honor, nevertheless he thanked him for an act so valuable, that there was no other for him that could be compared to it, and that, holding him henceforth to be a brother, he should in all, and through all, favor him. Then a shirt and some other articles of clothing were directed to be given to the chief, who, thankfully receiving them, took leave and went to his town.

CHAPTER 10

How the Governor, having sent the ships to Cuba, marched inland, leaving one hundred men at the port.

From the port of Espiritu Santo, where the Governor was, he sent the chief castellan, with fifty cavalry and thirty or forty infantry, to the province of Paracoxi, to observe the character of the country, to inquire of that farther on, and to let him hear by message of what he should discover; he also sent the vessels to Cuba, that, at an appointed time, they might return with provisions. As the principal object of Vasco Porcallo de Figueroa in coming to Florida had been to get slaves for his plantation and mines, finding, after some incursions, that no seizures could be made, because of dense forest and extensive bogs, he determined to go back to Cuba; and in consequence of that resolution, there grew up such a difference between him and de Soto, that neither of them treated nor spoke to the other kindly. Still, with words of courtesy, he asked permission of him to return, and took his leave.

Baltasar de Gallegos having arrived at Paracoxi, thirty Indians came to him on the part of the absent cacique, one of whom said: "King Paracoxi, lord of this province, whose vassals we are, sends us to ask of you what it is you seek in his country, and in what he can serve you;" to which the chief castellan replied, that he much thanked the cacique for his proffer, and bade them tell him to return to his town, where they would talk together of a peace and friendship he greatly desired to establish. They went off, and came again the next day, reporting that as their lord could not appear, being very unwell, they had come in his stead to see what might be wanted. They were asked if they had knowledge or information of any country where gold and silver might be found in plenty; to which they answered yes; that towards the sunset was a province called Cale, the inhabitants of which were at war with those of territories where the greater portion of the year was summer, and where there was so much gold, that when the people came to make war upon those of Cale, they wore golden hats like casques.

As the cacique had not come, Gallegos, reflecting, suspected the message designed for delay, that he might put himself in a condition of safety; and fearing that, if those men were suffered to depart, they might never return, he ordered them to be chained together, and sent the news to camp by eight men on horseback. The Governor, hearing what had passed, showed great pleasure, as did the rest who were with him, believing what the Indians said might

be true. He left thirty cavalry and seventy infantry at the port, with provisions for two years, under command of Captain Calderon, marching with the others inland to Paracoxi; thence, having united with the force already there, he passed through a small town named Acela, and came to another called To-caste, whence he advanced with fifty of foot and thirty horse towards Cale; and having gone through an untenanted town, some natives were seen in a lake, to whom having spoken by an interpreter, they came out and gave him a guide. From there he went to a river of powerful current, in the midst of which was a tree, whereon they made a bridge. Over this the people passed in safety, the horses being crossed swimming to a hawser, by which they were drawn to the other bank, the first that entered the water having been drowned for the want of one. The Governor sent two men on horseback, with word to those in the rear that they should advance rapidly, for that the way was becoming toilsome and the provisions were short. He came to Cale and found the town abandoned; but he seized three spies, and tarried there until the people should arrive, they travelling hungry and on bad roads, the country being very thin of maize, low, very wet, pondo, and thickly covered with trees. (**Note** They had now reached the higher country, which begins in the southern part of Polk County.) Where there were inhabitants, some watercresses could be found, which they who arrived first would gather, and, cooking them in water with salt, eat them without other thing; and they who could get none, would seize the stalks of maize and eat them, the ear, being young, as yet containing no grain. Having come to the river, which the Governor had passed, they got cabbage from the low palmetto growing there, like that of Andalusia. There they were met by the messengers, who, reporting a great deal of maize in Cale, gave much satisfaction. While the people should be coming up, the Governor ordered all the ripe grain in the fields, enough for three months, to be secured. In gathering it three Spainards were slain. One of two Indians who were made prisoners stated that seven days' journey distant was a large province, abounding in maize, called Apalache. Presently, with fifty cavalry and sixty infantry, he set out from Cale, leaving Luis de Moscoso, the master of the camp, in command, with directions not to move until he should be ordered. Up to that time, no one had been able to get servants who should make his bread; and the method being to beat out the maize in log mortars with a one-handed pestle of wood, some also sifting the flour afterward through their shirts of mail, the process was found so laborious, that many, rather than crush the grain, preferred to eat it parched and sodden. The mass was baked in clay dishes, set over fire, in the manner that I have described as done in Cuba.

CHAPTER 11

How the Governor arrived at Caliquen, and thence, taking the cacique with him, came to Napetaca, where the Indians, attempting to rescue him, had many of their number killed and captured.

On the eleventh day of August, in the year 1539, the Governor left Cale, and arrived to sleep at a small town called Ytara, and the next day at another called Potano, and the third at Utinama, and then at another named Malapaz. This place was so called because one, representing himself to be its cacique, came peacefully, saying that he wished to serve the Governor with his people, and asked that he would cause the twenty-eight men and women, prisoners taken the night before, to be set at liberty; that provisions should be brought, and that he would furnish a guide for the country in advance of us; whereupon, the Governor having ordered the prisoners to be let loose, and the Indian put under guard, the next day in the morning came many natives close to a scrub surrounding the town, near which the prisoner asked to be taken, that he might speak and satisfy them, as they would obey in whatever he commanded; but no sooner had he found himself close to them, than he boldly started away, and fled so swiftly that no one could overtake him, going off with the rest into the woods. The Governor ordered a bloodhound, already fleshed upon him, to be let loose, which, passing by many, seized upon the faithless cacique, and held him until the Catholics had come up.

From this town the people went to sleep at that of Cholupaha, which, for its abundance of maize, received the name of Villafarta; thence, crossing a river before it, by a bridge they had made of wood, the Spainards marched two days through an uninhabited country.

On the seventeenth day of August they arrived at Caliquen, where they heard of the province of Apalache, of Narvaez having been there and having embarked, because no road was to be found over which to go forward, and of there being no other town, and that water was on all sides. Every mind was depressed at this information, and all counselled the Governor to go back to the port, that they might not be lost, as Narvaez had been, and to leave the land of Florida; that, should they go further, they might not be able to get back, as the little maize that was yet left the Indians would secure: to which de Soto replied, that he would never return until he had seen with his own eyes what was asserted, things that to him appeared incredible. Then he ordered us to be in readiness for the saddle, sending word to Luis de Moscoso to

advance from Cale, that he waited for him; and, as in the judgment of the master of the camp, and of many others, they should have to return from Apalache, they buried in Cale some iron implements with other things. They reached Caliquen through much suffering; for the land over which the Governor had marched lay wasted and was without maize.

All the people having come up, a bridge was ordered to be made over a river that passed near the town, whereon we crossed, the tenth day of September, taking with us the cacique. When three days on our journey, some Indians arrived to visit their lord; and every day they came out to the road, playing upon flutes, a token among them that they come in peace. They stated that further on there was a cacique named Uzachil, kinsman of the chief of Caliquen, their lord, who waited the arrival of the Governor, prepared to do great services; and they besought him to set their cacique free, which he feared to do, lest they should go off without giving him any guides; so he got rid of them from day to day with specious excuses.

We marched five days, passing through some small towns, and arrived at Napetaca on the fifteenth day of September, where we found fourteen or fifteen Indians who begged for the release of the cacique of Caliquen, to whom the Governor declared that their lord was no prisoner, his attendance being wished only as far as Uzachil. Having learned from Juan Ortiz, to whom a native had made it known, that the Indians had determined to assemble and fall upon the Spainards, for the recovery of their chief, the Governor, on the day for which the attack was concerted, commanded his men to be in readiness, the cavalry to be armed and on horseback, each one so disposed of in his lodge as not to be seen of the Indians, that they might come to the town without reserve. Four hundred warriors, with bows and arrows, appeared in sight of the camp; and, going into a thicket, they sent two of their number to demand the cacique: the Governor, with six men on foot, taking the chief by the hand, conversing with him the while to assure the Indians, went towards the place where they were, when, finding the moment propitious, he ordered a trumpet to be sounded: directly, they who were in the houses, foot as well as horse, set upon the natives, who, assailed unexpectedly, thought only of their safety. Of two horses killed, one was that of the Governor, who was mounted instantly on another. From thirty to forty natives fell by the lance; the rest escaped into two very large ponds, situated some way apart, wherein they swam about; and, being surrounded by the Catholics, they were shot at with cross-bow and arquebuse, although to no purpose, because of the long distance they were off.

At night, one of the lakes was ordered to be guarded, the people not being sufficient to encircle both. The Indians, in attempting to escape in the dark, would come swimming noiselessly to the shore, with a leaf of water-lily on the head, that they might pass unobserved; when those mounted, at sight of any ruffle on the surface, would dash into the water up to the breasts of the horses, and the natives would again retire. In such way passed the night, neither party taking any rest.

Juan Ortiz told them that, as escape was impossible, they would do well to give up; which they did, driven by extreme chillness of the water; and one after another, as cold overpowered, called out to him, asking not to be killed—that he was coming straightway to put himself in the hands of the Governor. At four o'clock in the morning they had all surrendered, save twelve of the principal men, who, as of more distinction and more valiant than the rest, preferred to die rather than yield: then the Indians of Paracoxi, who were going about unshackled, went in after them, swimming, and pulled them out by the hair. They were all put in chains, and, on the day following, were divided among the Catholics for their service.

While captives, these men determined to rebel, and gave the lead to an interpreter, one reputed brave, that when the Governor might come near to speak with him, he should strangle him; but no sooner was the occasion presented, and before his hands could be thrown about the neck of de Soto, his purpose was discovered, and he received so heavy a blow from him in the nostrils, that they gushed with blood. The Indians all rose together. He who could only catch up a pestle from a mortar, as well as he who could grasp a weapon, equally exerted himself to kill his master, or the first one he met; and he whose fortune it was to light on a lance, or a sword, handled it in a manner as though he had been accustomed to use it all his days.

One Indian, in the public yard of the town, with blade in hand, fought like a bull in the arena, until the halberdiers of the Governor, arriving, put an end to him. Another got up, with a lance, into a maize crib, made of cane, called by Indians *barbacoa*, and defended the entrance with the uproar of ten men, until he was stricken down with a battle-axe. They who were subdued may have been in all two hundred men: some of the youngest the Governor gave to those who had good chains and were vigilant; all the rest were ordered to execution, and, being bound to a post in the middle of the town yard, they were shot to death with arrows by the people of Paracoxi.



Napituca Massacre, Florida October 1539

(Note) In 1539, Hernando de Soto led an army of more than 500 men through the western parts of Timucua territory, stopping in a series of villages of the Ocale, Potano, Northern Utina, and Yustaga branches of the Timucua on his way to the Apalachee domain. His army seized the food stored in the villages, forced women into concubinage, and forced men and boys to serve as guides and bearers.

The army fought two battles with Timucua groups, resulting in heavy Timucua casualties. After defeating the resisting Timucuan warriors, Hernando de Soto had 200 executed, in what was to be called the Napituca Massacre, the first large-scale massacre by Europeans on what later became U.S. soil. De Soto was in a hurry to reach the Apalachee domain, where he expected to find gold and sufficient food to support his army through the winter, so he did not linger in Timucua territory.

CHAPTER 12

How the Governor arrived at Palache, and was informed that there was much gold inland.

On the twenty-third day of September the Governor left Napetaca, and went to rest at a river, where two Indians brought him a deer from the cacique of Uzachil; and the next day, having passed through a large town called Hapaluya, he slept at Uzachil. He found no person there; for the inhabitants, informed of the deaths at Napetaca, dared not remain. In the town was found their food, much maize, beans, and pumpkins, on which the Catholics lived. The maize is like coarse millet; the pumpkins are better and more savory than those of Spain.

Two captains having been sent in opposite directions, in quest of Indians, a hundred men and women were taken, one or two of whom were chosen out for the Governor, as was always customary for officers to do after successful inroads, dividing the others among themselves and companions. They were led off in chains, with collars about the neck, to carry luggage and grind corn, doing the labor proper to servants. Sometimes it happened that, going with them for wood or maize, they would kill the Spainard, and flee, with the chain on, which others would file at night with a splinter of stone, in the place of iron, at which work, when caught, they were punished, as a warning to others, and that they might not do the like. The women and youths, when removed a hundred leagues from their country, no longer cared, and were taken along loose, doing the work, and in a very little time learning the Spanish language.

From Uzachil the Governor went towards Apalache, and at the end of two days' travel arrived at a town called Axille. After that, the Indians having no knowledge of the Catholics, they were come upon unawares, the greater part escaping, nevertheless, because there were woods near town. The next day, the first of October, the Governor took his departure in the morning, and ordered a bridge to be made over a river which he had to cross. The depth there, for a stone's throw, was over the head, and afterward the water came to the waist, for the distance of a crossbow-shot, where was a growth of tall and dense forest, into which the Indians came, to ascertain if they could assail the men at work and prevent a passage; but they were dispersed by the arrival of crossbowmen, and some timbers being thrown in, the men gained the opposite side and secured the way.

On the fourth day of the week, Wednesday of St. Francis, (**Note** *St. Francis's day is the fourth of the month (October), but it was not Wednesday in 1539. Rodrigo Ranjel, secretary of de Soto, says that the crossing was finished on Friday, October 3.*) the Governor crossed over and reached Uitachuco, a town subject to Apalache, where he slept. He found it burning, the Indians having set it on fire. Thenceforward the country was well inhabited, producing much corn, the way leading by many habitations like villages. Sunday, the twenty-fifth of October, (**Note** *This should be Sunday, October 5. October 25, 1539, came on Saturday.*) he arrived at the town of Uzela, and on Monday at Anhayca Apalache, where the lord of all that country and province resided. The camp-master, whose duty it is to divide and lodge the men, quartered them about the town, at the distance of half a league to a league apart. There were other towns which had much maize, pumpkins, beans, and dried plums of the country, whence were brought together at Anhayca Apalache what appeared to be sufficient provision for the winter. These ameixas are better than those of Spain, and come from trees that grow in the fields without being planted.

Informed that the sea was eight leagues distant, the Governor directly sent a captain thither, with cavalry and infantry, who found a town called Ochete, eight leagues on the way; and, coming to the coast, he saw where a great tree had been felled, the trunk split up into stakes, and with the limbs made into mangers. He found also the skulls of horses. With these discoveries he returned, and what was said of Narvaez was believed to be certain, that he had there made boats, in which he left the country, and was lost in them at sea. Presently Juan de Añasco made ready to go to the port of Espiritu Santo, taking thirty cavalry, with orders from the Governor to Calderon, who had remained there, that he should abandon the town, and bring all the people to Apalache.

In Uzachill, and other towns on the way, Añasco found many people who had already become careless; still, to avoid detention, no captures were made, as it was not well to give the Indians sufficient time to come together. He went through the towns at night, stopping at a distance from the population for three or four hours, to rest, and at the end of ten days arrived at the port. He despatched two caravels to Cuba, in which he sent to Doña Ysabel twenty women brought by him from Ytara and Potano, near Cale; and, taking with him the foot-soldiers in the brigantines, from point to point along the coast by sea, he went towards Palache. Calderon with the cavalry, and some crossbowmen of foot, went by land.

The Indians at several places beset him, and wounded some of the men. On his arrival, the Governor ordered planks and spikes to be taken to the coast for building a piragua, into which thirty men entered well armed from the bay, going to and coming from sea, waiting the arrival of the brigantines, and sometimes fighting with the natives, who went up and down the estuary in canoes. On Saturday, the twenty-ninth of November, in a high wind, an Indian passed through the sentries undiscovered, and set fire to the town, two portions of which, in consequence, were instantly consumed.

On Sunday, the twenty-eighth of December, Juan de Añasco arrived; and the Governor directed Francisco Maldonado, captain of infantry, to run the coast to the westward with fifty men, and look for an entrance; proposing to go himself in that direction by land on discoveries. The same day, eight men rode two leagues about the town in pursuit of Indians, who had become so bold that they would venture up within two crossbow-shot of the camp to kill our people. Two were discovered engaged in picking beans, and might have escaped, but a woman being present, the wife of one of them, they stood to fight. Before they could be killed, three horses were wounded, one of which died in a few days. Calderon going along the coast near by, the Indians came out against him from a wood, driving him from his course, and capturing from many of his company a part of their indispensable subsistence.

Three or four days having elapsed beyond the time set for the going and return of Maldonado, the Governor resolved that, should he not appear at the end of eight days, he would go thence and wait no longer; when the captain arrived, bringing with him an Indian from a Province called Ochus, sixty leagues from Apalache, and the news of having found a sheltered port with a good depth of water. The Governor was highly pleased, hoping to find a good country ahead; and he sent Maldonado to Havana for provisions, with which to meet him at that port of his discovery, to which he would himself come by land; but should he not reach there that summer, then he directed him to go back to Havana and return there the next season to await him, as he would make it his express object to march in quest of Ochus.

Francisco Maldonado went, and Juan de Guzman remained instead, captain of his infantry. Of the Indians taken in Napetuca, the treasurer, Juan Gaytan, brought a youth with him, who stated that he did not belong to that country, but to one afar in the direction of the sun's rising, from which he had been a long time absent visiting other lands; that its name was Yupaha, and was governed by a woman, the town she lived in being of astonishing size, and many

neighboring lords her tributaries, some of whom gave her clothing, others gold in quantity. He showed how the metal was taken from the earth, melted, and refined, exactly as though he had seen it all done, or else the Devil had taught him how it was; so that they who knew aught of such matters declared it impossible that he could give that account without having been an eye-witness; and they who beheld the signs he made, credited all that was understood as certain.

(Note) The earliest recorded visit of Europeans to the Georgia and North Carolina Mountains was in 1540. De Soto's Conquistadors spent several summer weeks at the capital of Kvse (pronounced Kău-shě in Itsate-Creek, but known as Kusa in English.) Kvse means "forested mountains" in Itza Maya.

Florida Indians told Pánfilo de Narváez in 1528 that the Apalachee People, who lived in the mountains many days to the north, mined and traded gold. The people, whom the Spanish called Apalache, called themselves the Palache, which is the Creek word for the Biloxi Indians. This is not general knowledge because the media has relied on commentaries about de Soto, rather than actually reading the chronicles. Just before heading north from the Florida Panhandle in 1540, de Soto was told that the capital of the Apalache province in the mountains was named Yupaha. Yupaha means "Horned Lord." The Florida Indians stated that Yupaha had much gold. De Soto set off to find Yupaha, but his chroniclers never mentioned the town again. Historians have traditionally assumed Yupaha to be a fable.

After leaving Kusa, de Soto passed through the towns of Tali-mochase (New Tali), Itapa, and then, what the chroniclers wrote as Ubahali. However, this would be a typical manner that Castilians would write the word, Yupaha-le, which is a Coastal Plain Itsate word meaning "Horned Lord People." So Yupaha really did exist. It probably was the Track Rock archaeological zone, because that is largest known town site in the gold-bearing section of the Georgia Mountains. Add an "s" to Itapa, and you have Itsapa. This may or may not been the town's real name. On occasion, the Spanish chroniclers did leave out letters or sounds from known Muskogean words. While staying in Kvse, de Soto would have been about 47 miles (75 km) west of Track Rock Gap. He dispatched a party to travel up Talking Rock Creek, which flowed into the Coosawattee River from a source in the Blue Ridge Mountains to the east. The party stopped in present day Pickens County, GA because they heard that there were witches living upstream. That stopping point would have been 32 miles (51 km) from Track Rock Gap.

CHAPTER 13

How the Governor went from Apalache in quest of Yupaha, and what befell him.

On Wednesday, the third of March, in the year 1540, the Governor left Anhaica Apalache to seek Yupaha. He had ordered his men to go provided with maize for a march through sixty leagues of desert. The cavalry carried their grain on the horses, and the infantry theirs on the back; because the Indians they brought with them for service, being naked and in chains, had perished in great part during the winter. On the fourth day of the journey they arrived at a deep river, (**Note** Probably the Flint River.) where a piragua was made; and, in consequence of the violence of the current, a cable of chains was extended from shore to shore, along which the boat passed, and the horses were drawn over, swimming thereto, by means of a windlass to the other side.

A day and a half afterwards, they arrived at a town by the name of Capachiqui, and on Friday, the eleventh, (**Note** *This should be Thursday the eleventh, which was the day on which they arrived at the first town in Capachiqui. Capachiqui was the second town in that province, according to Ranjel.*) the inhabitants were found to have gone off. The following day, five Catholics, going in the rear of the camp to search for mortars, in which the natives beat maize, went to some houses surrounded by a thicket, where many Indians lurked as spies, an equal number of whom, separating from the rest, set upon our men, one of whom fled back, crying out to arms. When they who could first answer to the call reached the spot, they found one of the Spainards killed, and the three others badly wounded, the Indians fleeing into a sheet of water, full of woods, into which the horses could not go. The Governor left Capachiqui, passing through a desert; and on Wednesday, the twenty-first (**Note** *Wednesday was the twenty-fourth, but they arrived at Toalli early on the morning of the twenty-third, according to Ranjel.*) of the month, came to Toalli.

The houses of this town were different from those behind, which were covered with dry grass; thenceforward they were roofed with cane, after the fashion of tile. They are kept very clean: some have their sides so made of clay as to look like tapia (mud walls). Throughout the cold country every Indian has a winter house, plastered inside and out, with a very small door, which is closed at dark, and a fire being made within, it remains heated like an oven, so that clothing is not needed during the night-time.

He has likewise a house for summer, and near it a kitchen, where fire is made and bread baked. Maize is kept in a barbacoa, which is a house with wooden sides, like a room, raised aloft on four posts, and has a floor of cane. The difference between the houses of the masters, or principal men, and those of the common people is that, besides being larger than the others, they have deep balconies on the front side, with cane seats, like benches; and about are many barbacoas, in which they bring together the tribute their people give them of maize, skins of deer, and blankets of the country.

These are like shawls, some of them made from the inner bark of trees, and others of a grass resembling nettle, which, by treading out, becomes like flax. The women use them for covering, wearing one about the body from the waist downward, and another over the shoulder, with the right arm left free, after the manner of the Gypsies: the men wear but one, which they carry over the shoulder in the same way, the loins being covered with a bragueiro of deer-skin, after the fashion of the woollen breech-cloth that was once the custom of Spain.

The skins are well dressed, the color being given to them that is wished, and in such perfection, that, when of vermillion, they look like very fine red broad-cloth; and when black, the sort in use for shoes, they are of the purest. The same hues are given to blankets.

The Governor left Toalli on the twenty-fourth day of March, and arrived on Thursday, in the evening, at a little stream (**Note** *Before arriving at this stream they crossed a very broad river, according to Ranjel, which Biedma says was the first river flowing to the east. This was the Ocmulgee River.*) where a small bridge was made, and the people passed to the opposite side. Benito Fernandes, a Portuguese, fell off from it, and was drowned.

So soon as the Governor had crossed, he found a town, a short way on, by the name of Achese, the people of which, having had no knowledge of the Spainards, plunged into a river; nevertheless, some men and women were taken, among whom was found one who understood the youth, the guide to Yupaha, which rather confirmed what he stated, as they had come through regions speaking different languages, some of which he did not understand. By one of the Indians taken there, the Governor sent to call the cacique from the farther side of the river, who, having come to him, thus spoke:

Very High, Powerful, and Good Master:

The things that seldom happen bring astonishment. Think, then, what must be the effect on me and mine, of the sight of you and your people, whom we have at no time seen, astride the fierce brutes, your horses, entering with such speed and fury into my country, that we had no tidings of your coming—things so altogether new, as to strike awe and terror to our hearts, which it was not nature to resist, so that we should receive you with the sobriety due to so kingly and famous a lord. Trusting to your greatness and personal qualities, I hope no fault will be found in me, and that I shall rather receive favors, of which one is that with my person, my country, and my vassals, you will do as with your own things; and another, that you tell me who you are, whence you come, whither you go, and what it is you seek, that I may the better serve you.

The Governor responded, that he greatly thanked him for his good-will, as much so as though he had given him a great treasure. He told him that he was the child of the Sun, coming from its abode, and that he was going about the country, seeking for the greatest prince there, and the richest province. The cacique stated that farther on was a great lord, whose territory was called Ocute. He gave him a guide, who understood the language, to conduct him thither; and the Governor commanded his subjects to be released. A high cross, made of wood, was set up in the middle of the town-yard; and, as time did not allow more to be done, the Indians were instructed that it was put there to commemorate, according to Catholic teaching, the suffering of Christ, who was God and man; that he had created the skies and the earth, and had suffered for the salvation of all, and therefore, that they should revere that sign; and they showed by their manner that they would do so.

The Governor set out on the first day of April, and advanced through the country of the chief, along up a river, the shores of which were very populous. On the fourth he went through the town of Altamaca, (**Note** *Altamaha. Before arriving, they crossed either the Oconee or the Altamaha River.*) and on the tenth arrived at Ocute. The cacique sent him a present, by two thousand Indians, of many rabbits and partridges, maize bread, many dogs, and two turkeys. On account of the scarcity of meat, the dogs were as much esteemed by the Spainards as though they had been fat sheep. There was such want of meat and salt that oftentimes, in many places, a sick man had nothing for his nourishment, and was wasting away to bone, of some ail that elsewhere might have found a remedy; and would die of pure debility, saying: "Now, if I had but a slice of meat, or only a few lumps of salt, I should not thus die."

The Indians never lacked meat. With arrows they get abundance of deer, turkeys, rabbits, and other wild animals, being very skilful in killing game, which the Spainards were not; and even if they had been, there was not the opportunity for it, they being on the march the greater part of their time; nor did they, besides, ever dare to straggle off.

Such was the craving for meat, that when the six hundred men who followed de Soto arrived at a town, and found there twenty or thirty dogs, he who could get sight of one and kill him, thought he had done no little; and he who proved himself so active, if his captain knew of it, and he forgot to send him a quarter, would show his displeasure, and make him feel it in the watches, or in any matter of labor that came along, with which he could bear upon him.

On Monday, the twelfth of April, the Governor took his departure, the cacique of Ocute giving him four hundred tamemes, the Indians that carry burdens. He passed through a town, the lord of which was called Cofaqui, and came to the province of another, named Patofa, who, being at peace with the chief of Ocute and other neighboring lords, had heard of the Governor for a long time, and desired to see him. He went to call on him, and made this speech:

Powerful Lord:

Not without reason, now, will I ask that some light mishap befall me, in return for so great good fortune, and deem my lot a happy one; since I have come to what I most wished in life, to behold and have the opportunity in some way to serve you. Thus the tongue casts the shadow of the thought; but I, nevertheless, am as unable to produce the perfect image of my feelings as to control the appearances of my contentment. By what circumstance has this your land, which I govern, deserved to be seen by one so superior and excellent that all on earth should obey and serve him [de Soto] as a prince?

And those who here inhabit being so insignificant, how can they forget, in receiving this vast enjoyment, that, in the order of things, will follow upon it some great adversity? If we are held worthy of being yours, we can never be other than favored, nor less than protected in whatsoever is reasonable and just; for they that fail of deserving either, with the name of men can only be considered brutes. From the depth of my heart, and with the respect due to such a chief, I make mine offer; and pray that, in return for so sincere goodwill, you dispose of me, my country, and my vassals.

The Governor answered that his offers and good-will, shown in works, would greatly please him, and that he should ever bear them in memory to honor and favor him as he would a brother.

From this province of Patofa, back to the first cacique we found at peace, a distance of fifty leagues, the country is abundant, picturesque, and luxuriant, well watered, and having good river margins; thence to the harbor of Espiritu Santo, where we first arrived, the land of Florida, which may be three hundred leagues in length, a little more or less, is light, the greater part of it of pine-trees, and low, having many ponds; and in places are high and dense forests, into which the Indians that were hostile betook themselves, where they could not be found; nor could horses enter there, which, to the Spainards, was the loss of the food they carried away, and made it troublesome to get guides.



Four hundred tamemes

CHAPTER 14

How the Governor left the province of Patofa, marching into a desert country, where he, with his people, became exposed to great peril and underwent severe privation.

In the town of Patofa, the youth, whom the Governor brought with him for guide and interpreter, began to froth at the mouth, and threw himself on the ground as if he were possessed of the Devil. A Catholic exorcism being said over him, the fit went off. He stated that four days' journey from there, towards the sunrise, was the province he spoke of: the Indians at Patofa said that they knew of no dwellings in that direction, but that towards the north-west there was a province called Coça, a plentiful country having very large towns. The cacique told the Governor that if he desired to go thither he would give him a guide and Indians to carry burdens, and if he would go in the direction pointed out by the youth, he would furnish him with everything necessary for that also.

With words of love, and tendering each other services, they parted, the Governor receiving seven hundred tamemes. He took maize for the consumption of four days, and marched by a road that, gradually becoming less, on the sixth day disappeared. Led by the youth, they forded two rivers, [253] each the breadth of two shots of a crossbow, the water rising to the stirrups of the saddles, and passing in a current so powerful, that it became necessary for those on horseback to stand one before another, that they on foot, walking near, might cross along above them: then came to another of a more violent current, and larger, which was got over with more difficulty, the horses swimming for a lance's length at the coming out, into a pine-grove.

(Note *From the wording of the Ranjel narrative, Aymay was on the east side of the Savannah River and Cutifachiqui on the west side. The latter town was not at Silver Bluff, South Carolina, as commonly thought, but further down the river. Cofitachequi (as Ranjel spells it) is proper Creek, and means Dog-wood Town.*) The Governor menaced the youth, motioning that he would throw him to the dogs for having lied to him in saying that it was four days' journey, whereas they had travelled nine, each day of seven or eight leagues; and that the men and horses had become very thin, because of the sharp economy practised with the maize. The youth declared that he knew not where he was. Fortunately for him, at the time, there was not another whom Juan Ortiz understood, or he would have been cast to the dogs.

The Governor, leaving the camp among the pine-trees, marched that day, with some cavalry and infantry, five or six leagues, looking for a path, and came back at night very cast down, not having found any sign of inhabitants. The next day there was a variety of opinion about the course proper to take, whether to return or do otherwise. The country through which they had come remained wasted and without maize; the grain they had so far brought with them was spent; the beasts, like the men, were become very lean; and it was held very doubtful whether relief was anywhere to be found: moreover, it was the opinion that they might be beaten by any Indians whatsoever who should venture to attack them, so that continuing thus, whether by hunger or in strife, they must inevitably be overcome. The Governor determined to send thence in all directions on horseback, in quest of habitations; and the next day he despatched four captains to as many points, with eight of cavalry to each. They came back at night leading their beasts by the bridle, unable to carry their masters, or driven before them with sticks, having found no road, nor any sign of a settlement. He sent other four again the next day, with eight of cavalry apiece, men who could swim, that they might cross any ponds and rivers in the way, the horses being chosen of the best that were; Baltasar de Gallegos ascending by the river, Juan de Añasco going down it, Alfonso Romo and Juan Rodriguez Lobillo striking into the country.

The Governor had brought thirteen sows to Florida, which had increased to three hundred swine; and the maize having failed for three or four days, he ordered to be killed daily, for each man, half a pound of pork, on which small allowance, and some boiled herbs, the people with much difficulty lived. There being no food to give to the Indians of Patofa, they were dismissed, though they still wished to keep with the Spainards in their extremity, and showed great regret at going back before leaving them in a peopled country. Juan de Añasco came in on Sunday, in the afternoon, bringing with him a woman and a youth he had taken, with the report that he had found a small town twelve or thirteen leagues off; at which the Governor and his people were as much delighted as though they had been raised from death to life.

On Monday, the twenty-sixth of April, the Governor set out for Aymay, a town to which the Catholics gave the name of Socorro. At the foot of a tree, in the camp, they buried a paper, and in the bark, with a hatchet, they cut these words: "Dig here; at the root of this pine you will find a letter;" and this was so fixed that the captains, who had gone in quest of an inhabited country, should learn what the Governor had done and the direction he had taken.

There was no other road than the one Juan de Añasco had made moving along through the woods.

On Monday the Governor arrived at the town, with those the best mounted, all riding the hardest possible; some sleeping two leagues off, others three and four, each as he was able to travel and his strength held out. A barbacoa was found full of parched meal and some maize, which were distributed by allowance. Four Indians were taken, not one of whom would say anything else than that he knew of no other town. The Governor ordered one of them to be burned alive; and thereupon another said, that two days' journey from there was a province called Cutifachiqui.

On Wednesday the three captains came up: they had found the letter and followed on after the rest. From the command of Juan Rodriguez two men remained behind, their horses having given out, for which the Governor reprimanded him severely, and sent him to bring them. While they should be coming on he set out for Cutifachiqui, capturing three Indians in the road, who stated that the mistress of that country had already information of the Catholics, and was waiting for them in a town. He sent to her by one of them, offering his friendship and announcing his approach. Directly as the Governor arrived, four canoes came towards him, in one of which was a kinswoman of the Cacica, who, coming near, addressed him in these words:

Excellent Lord: My sister sends me to salute you, and to say, that the reason why she has not come in person is, that she has thought to serve you better by remaining to give orders on the other shore; and that, in a short time, her canoes will all be here, in readiness to conduct you thither, where you may take your repose and be obeyed.

The Governor thanked her, and she returned to cross the river. After a little time the Cacica came out of the town, seated in a chair, which some principal men having borne to the bank, she entered a canoe. Over the stern was spread an awning, and in the bottom lay extended a mat where were two cushions, one above the other, upon which she sate; and she was accompanied by her chief men, in other canoes, with Indians. She approached the spot where the Governor was, and, being arrived, thus addressed him:

Excellent Lord: Be this coming to these your shores most happy. My ability can in no way equal my wishes, nor my services become the merits of so great a prince; nevertheless, good wishes are to be valued more than all the treasures of the earth without them. With sincerest and purest good-will I tender you my person, my lands, my people, and make you these small gifts.



The Cacica presented much clothing of the country, from the shawls and skins that came in the other boats; and drawing from over her head a large string of pearls, she threw them about his neck, exchanging with him many gracious words of friendship and courtesy. She directed that canoes should come to the spot, whence the Governor and his people passed to the opposite side of the river. So soon as he was lodged in the town, a great many turkeys were sent to him. The country was delightful and fertile, having good interval lands upon the streams; the forest was open, with abundance of walnut and mulberry trees. The sea was stated to be distant two days' travel. About the place, from half a league to a league off, were large vacant towns, grown up in grass, that appeared as if no people had lived in them for a long time. The Indians said that, two years before, there had been a pest in the land, and the inhabitants had moved away to other towns. In the barbacoas were large quantities of clothing, shawls of thread, made from the bark of trees, and others of feathers, white, gray, vermillion, and yellow, rich and proper for winter. There were also many well-dressed deer-skins, of colors drawn over with designs, of which had been made shoes, stockings, and hose.

The Cacica, observing that the Catholics valued the pearls, told the Governor that, if he should order some sepulchres that were in the town to be searched, he would find many; and if he chose to send to those that were in the uninhabited towns, he might load all his horses with them. They examined those in the town, and found three hundred and fifty pounds' weight of pearls, and figures of babies and birds made of them.

The inhabitants are brown of skin, well formed and proportioned. They are more civilized than any people seen in all the territories of Florida, wearing clothes and shoes. This country, according to what the Indians stated, had been very populous. It appeared that the youth who was the guide had heard of it; and what was told him he declared to have seen, and magnified such parts as he chose, to suit his pleasure. He told the Governor that they had begun to enter upon the country he had spoken to him about, which, because of its appearance, with his being able to understand the language of the people, gained for him some credit. He wished to become a Catholic, and asked to be baptized, which was done, he receiving the name of Pedro; and the Governor commanded the chain to be struck off that he had carried until then.

In the town were found a dirk and beads that had belonged to Spainards, who, the Indians said, had many years before been in the port, distant two days' journey. He that had been there was the Governor-licentiate Ayllon, who came to conquer the land, and, on arriving at the port, died, when there followed divisions and murders among the chief personages, in quarrels as to who should command; and thence, without knowing any thing of the country, they went back to Spain.

To all it appeared well to make a settlement there, the point being a favorable one, to which could come all the ships from New Spain, Peru, Sancta Marta, and Tierra-Firme, going to Spain; because it is in the way thither, is a good country, and one fit in which to raise supplies; but de Soto, as it was his object to find another treasure like that of Atabalípa, lord of Peru, would not be content with good lands nor pearls, even though many of them were worth their weight in gold (and if the country were divided among Catholics, more precious should those be the Indians would procure than these they have, being bored with heat, which causes them to lose their hue): so he answered them who urged him to make a settlement, that in all the country together there was not support for his troops a single month; that it was necessary to return to Ochus, where Maldonado was to wait; and should a richer country not be found, they could always return to that who would, and in their absence the

Indians would plant their fields and be better provided with maize. The natives were asked if they had knowledge of any great lord farther on, to which they answered, that twelve days' travel thence was a province called Chiaha, subject to a chief of Coça.

The Governor then resolved at once to go in quest of that country, and being an inflexible man, and dry of word, who, although he liked to know what the others all thought and had to say, after he once said a thing he did not like to be opposed, and as he ever acted as he thought best, all bent to his will; for though it seemed an error to leave that country, when another might have been found about it, on which all the people could have been sustained until the crops had been made and the grain gathered, there were none who would say a thing to him after it became known that he had made up his mind.

(Note) *Chiaha was a Native American chiefdom located in the lower French Broad River valley in modern East Tennessee, in the southeastern United States. They lived in raised structures within boundaries of several stable villages. These overlooked the fields of maize, beans, squash, and tobacco, among other plants which they cultivated. Chiaha was the northern extreme of the paramount Coosa chiefdom's sphere of influence in the 16th century when the Spanish expeditions of Hernando de Soto and Juan Pardo passed through the area. The Spanish explorers' accounts of Chiaha provide a rare first-hand glimpse of life in a Dallas Phase Mississippian-era village. The Dallas culture, named after Dallas Island near Chattanooga, where its distinct characteristics were first observed, dominated much of East Tennessee between approximately 1300 and 1600 AD. Both the de Soto and Pardo expeditions spent several days at Chiaha's principal village. In addition, the Pardo expedition constructed a fort nearby called San Pedro. This was one of five forts constructed in the interior west of Joara, the largest Mississippian-era site in modern North Carolina. Pardo constructed his largest fort there first, known as Fort San Juan. All but one of his soldiers were killed by the Native Americans in 1568, and the Spanish did not attempt further colonization in the interior. The peoples suffered high mortality from infectious diseases carried by the Europeans. Historians believe this resulted in political realignments and the rise of the Cherokee and Creek tribes in these areas. By the time English explorers arrived here in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, the Chiaha area was dominated by the Cherokee.*

CHAPTER 15

How the Governor went from Cutifachiqui in quest of Coça, and what occurred to him on the journey.

On the third day of May, (Note *This should be May 13, according to Rodrigo Rangel, personal secretary to Hernando de Soto throughout his expedition.*) the Governor set out from Cutifachiqui; and, it being discovered that the wish of the Cacica was to leave the Spainards, if she could, giving them neither guides nor tamemes, because of the wicked outrages committed upon the inhabitants, there never failing to be men of low degree among the many, who will put the lives of themselves and others in jeopardy for some mean interest, the Governor ordered that she should be placed under guard and took her with him. This treatment, which was not a proper return for the hospitable welcome he had received, makes true the adage, For well doing, etc.; and thus she was carried away on foot with her female slaves.

This brought us service in all the places that were passed, she ordering the Indians to come and take the loads from town to town. We travelled through her territories a hundred leagues, in which, according to what we saw, she was greatly obeyed, whatsoever she ordered being performed with diligence and efficacy. Pedro, the guide, said she was not the suzeraine, but her niece, who had come to that town by her command to punish capitally some principal Indians who had seized upon the tribute; but to this no credit was given, because of the falsehoods in which he had been taken, though all was put up with, from the necessity of having some one whereby to understand what the Indians said.

In seven days the Governor arrived at the province of Chalaque, the country poorest off for maize of any that was seen in Florida, where the inhabitants subsisted on the roots of plants that they dig in the wilds, and on the animals they destroy there with their arrows.

They are very domestic people, are slight of form, and go naked. One lord brought the Governor two deer-skins as a great gift. Turkeys were abundant; in one town they presented seven hundred, and in others brought him what they had and could procure. He was detained in going from this province to that of Xualla five days, where they found little grain, but remained two days, because of the weariness of the men and the leanness of the horses.

(Note) *This town is the Choualla of the Inca and the old Cherokee town of Qualla, which was located above the junction of the Tuckasegee and Oconna-Luftee Rivers, in Swain County, North Carolina. From Cofitachequi the army took a northerly course, probably following the old Indian and traders' trail to old Fort Prince George, in Jackson County, South Carolina, and from there to Xualla.*

From Ocute to Cutifachiqui are one hundred and thirty leagues, of which eighty are desert; from Cutifa to Xualla are two hundred and fifty of mountainous country; thence to Guaxule, the way is over very rough and lofty ridges.

One day while on this journey, the Cacica of Cutifachi, whom the Governor brought with him, as has been stated, to the end of taking her to Guaxule, the farthest limit of her territories, conducted by her slaves, she left the road, with an excuse of going into a thicket, where, deceiving them, she so concealed herself that for all their search she could not be found. She took with her a cane box, like a trunk, called petaca, full of unbored pearls, of which those who had the most knowledge of their value said they were very precious. They were carried for her by one of the women; and the Governor, not to give offence, permitted it so, thinking that in Guaxulle he would beg them of her when he should give her leave to depart; but she took them with her, going to Xualla, with three slaves who had fled from the camp. A horseman, named Alimamos, who remained behind, sick of a fever, wandering out of the way, got lost; and he labored with the slaves to make them leave their evil design. Two of them did so, and came on with him to the camp. They overtook the Governor, after a journey of fifty leagues, in a province called Chiaha; and he reported that the Cacica remained in Xualla, with a slave of André de Vasconcelos, who would not come with him, and that it was very sure they lived together as man and wife, and were to go together to Cutifachiqui.

At the end of five days the Governor arrived at Guaxulle. The Spainards being seen to go after dogs, for their flesh, which the Indians do not eat, they gave them three hundred of those animals. Little maize was found there, or anywhere upon that route. The Governor sent a native with a message to the cacique of Chiaha, begging that he would order some maize to be brought together at his town, that he might sojourn there some time. He left Guaxulle, and after two days' travel arrived at Canasagua, where twenty men came out from the town on the road, each laden with a basket of mulberries. This fruit is abundant and good, from Cutifachiqui to this place, and thence onward in

other provinces, as are the walnut and the plum (persimmon); the trees growing about over the country, without planting or pruning, of the size and luxuriance they would have were they cultivated in orchards, by hoeing and irrigation. Leaving Canasagua, he marched five days through a desert.

Two leagues before he came to Chiaha, fifteen men met the Governor, bearing loads of maize, with word from the cacique that he waited for him, having twenty barbacoas full; that, moreover, himself, his lands, and his vassals, were subject to his orders. On the fifth day of July the Governor entered Chiaha. (**Note** *Chiaha was evidently on the island at the junction of the Little Tennessee and Tennessee Rivers, in Loudon County, Tennessee.*) The cacique received him with great pleasure, and, resigning to him his dwellings for his residence, thus addressed him:—

Powerful and Excellent Master: Fortunate am I that you will make use of my services. Nothing could happen that would give me so great contentment, or which I should value more. From Guaxule you sent to have maize for you in readiness to last two months: you have in this town twenty barbacoas full of the choicest and the best to be found in all this country. If the reception I give is not worthy of so great a prince, consider my youth, which will relieve me of blame, and receive my good-will, which, with true loyalty and pure, shall ever be shown in all things that concern your welfare.

The Governor answered him, that his gifts and his kindness pleased him greatly, and that he should ever consider him to be his brother.

There was abundance of lard in calabashes, drawn like olive oil, which the inhabitants said was the fat of bear. There was likewise found much oil of walnuts, which, like the lard, was clear and of good taste; and also a honey-comb, which the Spainards had never seen before, nor saw afterwards, nor honey, nor bees, in all the country.

The town was isolated, between two arms of a river, and seated near one of them. Above it, at the distance of two crossbow-shot, the water divided, and united again a league below. The vale between, from side to side, was the width in places of a crossbow-shot, and in others of two. The branches were very wide, and both were fordable: along their shores were very rich meadowlands, having many maize-fields.

As the Indians remained at home, no houses were taken save those of the chief, in which the Governor lodged; the people lived out, wherever there happened to be shelter, each man having his tree.

In this manner the army lay, the men out of order and far apart. The Governor passed it over, as the Indians were peaceful, and the weather very calm: the people would have suffered greatly had they been required to do differently. The horses arrived so worn out, that they could not bear their riders from weakness; for they had come all the way with only a little maize to live on, travelling, hungry and tired, even from beyond the desert of Ocute; so, as the greater part of them were unfit to be mounted, even in the necessary case of battle, they were turned out at night to graze, about a quarter of a league from the camp. The Spainards were greatly exposed, so much so that if at that time the Indians had set upon them, they would have been in bad way to defend themselves.

The duration of the sojourn was thirty days, in which time, the soil being covered with verdure, the horses fattened. At the departure, in consequence of the importunity of some who wanted more than was in reason, the Governor asked thirty women of the chief for slaves, who replied that he would confer with his principal men; when one night, before giving an answer, all went off from the town with their women and children. The next day, he having made up his mind to go in search of them, the cacique arrived, and, approaching, thus addressed him:—

Powerful Lord: Because of my shame, and out of fear of you, discovering that my subjects, contrary to my wishes, had chosen to absent themselves, I left without your permission; but, finding the error of my way, I have returned like a true vassal, to put myself in your power, that you may do with my person as shall seem best to you. My people will not obey me, nor do any thing that an uncle of mine does not command: he governs this country, in my place, until I shall be of mature age. If you would pursue and punish them for disobedience, I will be your guide, since my fate at present forbids me doing more.

The Governor then, with thirty mounted men and as many footmen, went in search of the people. Passing by the towns of some of the chiefs who had gone off, he cut down and destroyed the great maize-fields; and going along up the stream where the natives were, on an islet, to which the cavalry could not go, he sent word to them, by an Indian, that they should put away all their fears, and, returning to their abodes, give him tamemes, as had been done all the way along, since he did not wish to have women, finding how very dear they were to them. The Indians judged it well to come and make their excuses to him, so they all went back to the town.

A cacique of Acoste, who came to see the Governor, after tendering his services, and they had exchanged compliments and proffers of friendship, was asked if he had any information of a rich land; he answered yes: that towards the north there was a province called Chisca, and that a forge was there for copper, or other metal of that color, though brighter, having a much finer hue, and was to appearances much better, but was not so much used, for being softer; which was the statement that had been given in Cutifachiqui, where we had seen some chopping-knives that were said to have a mixture of gold.

As the country on the way was thinly peopled, and it was said there were mountains over which the beasts could not go, the Governor would not march directly thither, but judged that, keeping in an inhabited territory, the men and animals would be in better condition, while he would be more exactly informed of what there was, until he should turn to it through the ridges and a region which he could more easily travel. He sent two Spainards to the country of Chisca, by Indians who spoke the language, that they might view it, and were told that he would await their return at Chiaha for what they should have to say.

(Note) *The territory of the Yuchi, or Chisca, as De Soto knew them, lay northwest of the concentric spheres of influence of the chiefdom of Cauchi and the paramount chiefdom of Joara and north of the chiefdom (later paramount chiefdom) of Chiaha. Their territory spread across Western North Carolina, Upper East Tennessee, and Southwestern Virginia, roughly coextensive with the Late Pisgah Phase. Their language, Yuchi, is a linguistic isolate. In addition to Chisca, the Yuchi were also called Uchi and Huchi in some chronicles of Pardo's expeditions. The first entrada to encounter the Yuchi was that of Hernando de Soto in the year 1540. De Soto's local guides called them 'Chisca'. Contact was very limited.*

As the Spanish paused in Chiaha, probably located at this time on Zimmerman's Island in the French Broad River near Dandridge, Tennessee, De Soto sent out two Spanish soldiers along with a contingent of Chiaha warriors to scout Chisca territory, rumored to mine copper and possibly gold. The scouting party was attacked and driven off, reporting back to the commander that the land was rough and rocky and unfit to grow much food. That was the extent of this entrada's contact.

CHAPTER 16

How the Governor left Chiaha, and, having run a hazard of falling by the hands of the Indians, at Acoste, escaped by his address: what occurred to him on the route, and how he came to Coça.

When the Governor had determined to move from Chiaha towards Coste, (**Note** *This place was located on one of the islands in the Tennessee River, just above Chattanooga.*) he sent for the cacique to come before him, and with kind words took his leave, receiving some slaves as a gift, which pleased him. In seven days the journey was concluded. On the second day of July, the camp being pitched among the trees, two crossbow-shot distant from the town, he went with eight men of his guard toward where the cacique was, who received him evidently with great friendship. While they were conversing, some infantry went into the town after maize, and, not satisfied with what they got, they rummaged and searched the houses, stealing what they would; at which conduct the owners began to rise and arm; some of them, with clubs in their hands, going at five or six men who had given offence, beat them to their satisfaction.

The Governor, discovering that they were all bent upon some mischief, and himself among them with but few Spainards about him, turned to escape from the difficulty by a stratagem much against his nature, clear and reliable as it was, and the more unwillingly as it grieved him that an Indian should presume, either with or without cause, to offer any indignity to a Catholic: he seized a stave and took part with the assailants against his own people, which while it gave confidence, directly he sent a message secretly to the camp, that armed men should approach where he was; then taking the chief by the hand, speaking to him with kind words, drew him with some principal men away from the town, out into an open road in sight of the encampment, where cautiously the Spainards issued and by degrees surrounded them.

In this manner they were conducted within the tents; and when near his marquee the Governor ordered them to be put under guard. He told them that they could not go thence without giving him a guide and Indians for carrying loads, nor until the sick men had arrived whom he had ordered to come down by the river in canoes from Chiaha, and so likewise those he had sent to the province of Chisca. He feared that both the one and the other had been killed by the Indians. In three days they that went to Chisca got back, and related that they had been taken through a country so scant of maize, and with such

high mountains, that it was impossible the army should march in that direction; and finding the distance was becoming long, and that they should be back late, upon consultation they agreed to return, coming from a poor little town where there was nothing of value, bringing a cow-hide as delicate as a calf-skin the people had given them, the hair being like the soft wool on the cross of the merino with the common sheep.

The cacique having furnished the guide and tamemes, by permission of the Governor he went his way. The Catholics left Coste the ninth day of July, and slept that night at Tali. (**Note** *Tali was located in the bend of the Tennessee River, just below Chattanooga. Here they left the river.*) The cacique had come from the town to meet the Governor on the road, and made him this speech:—

Excellent Great Prince: Worthy are you of being served and obeyed by all the princes of the world, for by the face can one judge far of the inner qualities. Who you are I knew, and also of your power, before your coming here. I wish not to draw attention to the lowliness in which I stand before you, to make my poor services acceptable and agreeable, since, where the strength fails, the will should instead be praised and taken. Hence, I dare to ask that you will only consider and attend to what you will command me to do here in your country.

The Governor answered, that his good-will and offer pleased him as much as though he had tendered him all the treasures of the earth: that he would always be treated by him as a true brother, favored and esteemed. The cacique ordered provision to be brought for two days' use, the time the Governor should be present; and on his departure, gave him the use of two men and four women, who were wanted to carry burdens.

They travelled six days, passing by many towns subject to the cacique of Coça; and, as they entered those territories, numerous messengers came from him on the road every day to the Governor, some going, others coming, until they arrived at Coça, on Friday, the sixteenth of July. The cacique came out to receive him at the distance of two crossbow-shot from the town, borne in a litter on the shoulders of his principal men, seated on a cushion, and covered with a mantle of marten-skins, of the size and shape of a woman's shawl: on his head he wore a diadem of plumes, and he was surrounded by many attendants playing upon flutes and singing. Coming to where the Governor was, he made his obeisance, and followed it by these words:—

Powerful Lord, superior to every other of the Earth: Although I come but now to meet you, it is a long time since I have received you in my heart. That was done the first day I heard of you, with so great desire to serve, please, and give you contentment, that this, which I express, is nothing in comparison with that which is within me. Of this you may be sure, that to have received the dominion of the world would not have interested me so greatly as the sight of you, nor would I have held it for so great a felicity. Do not look for me to offer you that which is your own—this person, these lands, these vassals. My only desire is to employ myself in commanding these people, that, with all diligence and befitting respect, they conduct you hence to the town in festivity of voices and with flutes, where you will be lodged and waited upon by me and them, where all I possess you will do with as with your own, and in thus doing you will confer favor.

The Governor gave him thanks, and with mutual satisfaction they walked on toward the place conferring, the Indians giving up their habitations by order of their cacique, and in which the General and his men took lodging. In the barbacoes was a great quantity of maize and beans: the country, thickly settled in numerous and large towns, with fields between, extending from one to another, was pleasant, and had a rich soil with fair river margins. In the woods were many plums (persimmons), as well those of Spain as of the country; and wild grapes on vines growing up into the trees, near the streams; likewise a kind that grew on low vines elsewhere, the berry being large and sweet, but, for want of hoeing and dressing, had large stones.

It was the practice to keep watch over the caciques that none should absent themselves, they being taken along by the Governor until coming out of their territories; for by thus having them the inhabitants would await their arrival in the towns, give a guide, and men to carry the loads, who before leaving their country would have liberty to return to their homes, as sometimes would the tamemes, so soon as they came to the domain of any chief where others could be got. The people of Coça, seeing their lord was detained, took it amiss, and, going off, hid themselves in the scrub, as well those of the town of the cacique as those of the towns of the principal men his vassals. The Governor despatched four captains in as many directions to search for them: many men and women were taken who were put in chains. Seeing how much harm they received, and how little they gained by going off, they came in, declaring that they desired to serve in all that was possible. Of the prisoners, some of the chiefs, whom the cacique interceded for, were let go; of the rest, each one took away with him as slaves those he had in chains.

CHAPTER 17

Of how the Governor went from Coça to Tascaluça.

The Governor rested in Coça twenty-five days. On Friday, the twentieth of August, he set out in quest of a province called Tascaluça, taking with him the cacique of Coça. The first day he went through Tallimuchase, a great town without inhabitants, halting to sleep half a league beyond, near a river-bank. The following day he came to Ytaua, a town subject to Coça. He was detained six days, because of a river near by that was then swollen: so soon as it could be crossed he took up his march, and went towards Ullibahali. Ten or twelve chiefs came to him on the road, from the cacique of that province, tendering his service, bearing bows and arrows and wearing bunches of feathers.

The Governor having arrived at the town with a dozen cavalry and several of his guard, he left them at the distance of a crossbow-shot and entered the town. He found all the Indians with their weapons, and, according to their ways, it appeared to him in readiness for action: he understood afterwards that they had determined to wrest the cacique of Coça from his power, should that chief have called on them. The place was enclosed, and near by ran a small stream. The fence, which was like that seen afterwards to other towns, was of large timber sunk deep and firmly into the earth, having many long poles the size of the arm, placed crosswise to nearly the height of a lance, with embrasures, and coated with mud inside and out, having loop-holes for archery. The Governor ordered all his men to enter the town. The cacique, who at the moment was at a town on the opposite shore, was sent for, and he came at once. After some words between him and the Governor, proffering mutual service, he gave the tamemes that were requisite and thirty women as slaves. Mançano, a native of Salamanca, of noble ancestry, having strayed off in search of the grapes, which are good here, and plenty, was lost.

The Spainards left, and that day they arrived to sleep at a town subject to the lord of Ullibahali, and the next day they came to pass the night at the town of Toasi, where the inhabitants gave the Governor thirty women and the tamemes that were wanted. The amount of travel usually performed was five or six leagues a day, passing through settled country; and when through desert, all the haste possible was made, to avoid the want of maize. From Toasi, passing through some towns subject to the lord of the province of Tallise, he journeyed five days, and arrived at the town the eighteenth day of September.

Tallise was large, situated by the side of a great river, other towns and many fields of maize being on the opposite shore, the country on both sides having the greatest abundance of grain. The inhabitants had gone off. The Governor sent to call the cacique, who, having arrived, after an interchange of kind words and good promises, lent him forty men. A chief came to the Governor in behalf of the cacique of Tastaluça, and made the following address:

Very Powerful, Virtuous, and Esteemed Lord: The grand cacique of Tascaluça, my master, sends me to salute you. He bids me say, that he is told how all, not without reason, are led captive by your perfections and power; that wheresoever lies your path you receive gifts and obedience, which he knows are all your due; and that he longs to see you as much as he could desire for the continuance of life. Thus, he sends me to offer you his person, his lands, his subjects; to say, that wheresoever it shall please you to go through his territories, you will find service and obedience, friendship and peace. In requital of this wish to serve you, he asks that you so far favor him as to say when you will come; for that the sooner you do so, the greater will be the obligation, and to him the earlier pleasure.

The Governor received and parted with the messenger graciously, giving him beads (which by the Indians are not much esteemed) and other articles, that he should take them to his lord. He dismissed the cacique of Coça, that he might return to his country: he of Tallise gave him the tamemes that were needed; and, having sojourned twenty days, the Governor set out for Tastaluça. He slept the night at a large town called Casiste, and the next day, passing through another, arrived at a village in the province of Tastaluça; and the following night he rested in a wood, two leagues from the town where the cacique resided, and where he was then present. He sent the master of the camp, Luis de Moscoso, with fifteen cavalry, to inform him of his approach.

The cacique was at home, in a piazza. Before his dwelling, on a high place, was spread a mat for him, upon which two cushions were placed, one above another, to which he went and sat down, his men placing themselves around, some way removed, so that an open circle was formed about him, the Indians of the highest rank being nearest to his person. One of them shaded him from the sun with a circular umbrella, spread wide, the size of a target, with a small stem, and having deer-skin extended over cross-sticks, quartered with red and white, which at a distance made it look of taffeta, the colors were so very perfect. It formed the standard of the chief, which he carried into battle. His appearance was full of dignity: he was tall of person, muscular, lean, and symmetrical.

He was the suzerain of many territories, and of a numerous people, being equally feared by his vassals and the neighboring nations. The master of the camp, after he had spoken to him, advanced with his company, their steeds leaping from side to side, and at times towards the chief, when he, with great gravity, and seemingly with indifference, now and then would raise his eyes, and look on as in contempt.



Luis de Moscoso Alvarado

Luis de Moscoso Alvarado was a conquistador. He and his two brothers worked with Hernando de Soto. He obtained the title of "maestre de campo" (field commander) and kept this title until March 1541, when the group was attacked by the Chickasaw Native American tribe, which caused the death of twelve Spaniards and many of the horses that participated in the expedition.

The Governor approached him, but he made no movement to rise; he took him by the hand, and they went together to seat themselves on the bench that was in the piazza. The cacique addressed him these words:—

Powerful Chief: Your lordship is very welcome. With the sight of you I receive as great pleasure and comfort as though you were an own brother whom I dearly loved. It is idle to use many words here, as it is not well to speak at length where a few may suffice. The greater the will the more estimable the deed; and acts are the living witnesses of truth. You shall learn how strong and positive is my will, and how disinterested my inclination to serve you. The gifts you did me the favor to send I esteem in all their value, but most because they were yours. See in what you will command me.

The Governor satisfied the chief with a few brief words of kindness. On leaving he determined, for certain reasons, to take him along. The second day on the road he came to a town called Piache; a great river ran near, and the Governor asked for canoes.

The Indians said they had none, but that they could have rafts of cane and dried wood, whereon they might readily enough go over, which they diligently set about making, and soon completed. They managed them; and the water being calm, the Governor and his men easily crossed.

From the port of Espiritu Santo to Palache, a march of about a hundred leagues, the course was west; from Apalache to Cutifachiqui, which may be four hundred and thirty leagues, it was northeast; from thence to Xualla, two hundred and fifty leagues, it was towards the north; and thence to Tastaluça, which may be some other two hundred and fifty leagues, one hundred and ninety of them were toward the west, going to the province of Coça, and the sixty southwardly, in going thence to Tastaluça.

After crossing the river of Piache, a Catholic having gone to look after a woman gotten away from him, he had been either captured or killed by the natives, and the Governor pressed the chief to tell what had been done; threatening, that should the man not appear, he would never release him.

The cacique sent an Indian thence to Mauilla, the town of a chief, his vassal, whither they were going, stating that he sent to give him notice that he should have provisions in readiness and Indians for loads; but which, as afterwards appeared, was a message for him to get together there all the warriors in his country.

The Governor marched three days, the last one of them continually through an inhabited region, arriving on Monday, the eighteenth day of October, at Mauilla. (**Note** *Mauilla or Mabila may have been located on the prairie north of the Black Warrior and east of the Tombigbee River, in Greene County, Alabama.*) He rode forward in the vanguard, with fifteen cavalry and thirty infantry, when a Spainard he had sent with a message to the cacique, three or four days before, with orders not to be gone long, and to discover the temper of the Indians, came out from the town and reported that they appeared to him to be making preparation; for that while he was present many weapons were brought, and many people came into the town, and work had gone on rapidly to strengthen the palisade. Luis de Moscoso said that, since the Indians were so evil disposed, it would be better to stop in the woods; to which the Governor answered, that he was impatient of sleeping out, and that he would lodge in the town.

Arriving near, the chief came out to receive him, with many Indians singing and playing on flutes, and after tendering his services, gave him three cloaks of marten-skins. The Governor entered the town with the caciques, seven or eight men of his guard, and three or four cavalry, who had dismounted to accompany them; and they seated themselves in a piazza.

The cacique of Tastaluça asked the Governor to allow him to remain there, and not to weary him any more with walking; but, finding that was not to be permitted, he changed his plan, and, under pretext of speaking with some of the chiefs, he got up from where he sate, by the side of the Governor, and entered a house where were many Indians with their bows and arrows. The Governor, finding that he did not return, called to him; to which the cacique answered that he would not come out, nor would he leave that town; that if the Governor wished to go in peace, he should quit at once, and not persist in carrying him away by force from his country and its dependencies.

CHAPTER 18

How the Indians rose upon the Governor, and what followed.

The Governor, in view of the determination and furious answer of the cacique, thought to soothe him with soft words; to which he made no answer, but, with great haughtiness and contempt, withdrew to where de Soto could not see nor speak to him. The Governor, that he might send word to the cacique for him to remain in the country at his will, and to be pleased to give him a guide, and persons to carry burdens, that he might see if he could pacify him with gentle words, called to a chief who was passing by. The Indian replied, loftily, that he would not listen to him. Baltasar de Gallegos, who was near, seized him by the cloak of marten-skins that he had on, drew it off over his head, and left it in his hands; whereupon, the Indians all beginning to rise, he gave him a stroke with a cutlass, that laid open his back, when they, with loud yells, came out of the houses, discharging their bows.

(Note) *Baltasar was born about 1500. De Soto named Gallegos his Field Marshal, and encouraged him to travel to Cuba with his wife and household. He did so, taking along several servants, horses, and slaves at an expense of more than 4,000 ducats. Once Gallegos arrived in Florida he engaged in many conquests, wars, and expeditions that took place in the following years. In the process he lost several of his horses and slaves. He also suffered the death of his brother who had participated in the expedition and who was a priest of the Dominican order. Gallegos was one of the members of the Florida expedition most frequently mentioned by Elvas, Rangel and Garcilaso de la Vega.*

Baltasar was cousin to Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca. Cabeza de Vaca was originally going to accompany Baltasar on the Hernando de Soto expedition but backed out. Cristobal de Espindola, also a relative of Cabeza de Vaca, joined the de Soto expedition along with Gallegos. His brother, Juan de Gallegos and relative Rodrigo de Gallegos, were both priests in the Dominican Order who joined the de Soto expedition.

The Governor, discovering that if he remained there they could not escape, and if he should order his men, who were outside of the town, to come in, the horses might be killed by the Indians from the houses and great injury done, he ran out; but before he could get away he fell two or three times, and was helped to rise by those with him.

He and they were all badly wounded: within the town five Catholics were instantly killed. Coming forth, he called out to all his men to get farther off, because there was much harm doing from the palisade. The natives discovering that the Spainards were retiring, and some, if not the greater number, at more than a walk, the Indians followed with great boldness, shooting at them, or striking down such as they could overtake. Those in chains having set down their burdens near the fence while the Catholics were retiring, the people of Mauilla lifted the loads on to their backs, and, bringing them into the town, took off their irons, putting bows and arms in their hands, with which to fight.

Thus did the foe come into possession of all the clothing, pearls, and whatsoever else the Spainards had beside, which was what their Indians carried. Since the natives had been at peace as far as to that place, some of us, putting our arms in the luggage, had gone without any; and two, who were in the town, had their swords and halberds taken from them, and put to use.

The Governor, presently as he found himself in the field, called for a horse, and, with some followers, returned and lanced two or three of the Indians; the rest, going back into the town, shot arrows from the palisade. Those who would venture on their nimbleness came out a stone's throw from behind it, to fight, retiring from time to time, when they were set upon.

At the time of the affray there was a friar, a clergyman, a servant of the Governor, and a female slave in the town, who, having no time in which to get away, took to a house, and there remained until after the Indians became masters of the place. They closed the entrance with a lattice door; and there being a sword among them, which the servant had, he put himself behind the door, striking at the Indians that would have come in; while, on the other side, stood the friar and the priest, each with a club in hand, to strike down the first that should enter.

The Indians, finding that they could not get in by the door, began to unroof the house: at this moment the cavalry were all arrived at Mauilla, with the infantry that had been on the march, when a difference of opinion arose as to whether the Indians should be attacked, in order to enter the town; for the result was held doubtful, but finally it was concluded to make the assault.

CHAPTER 19

How the Governor set his men in order of battle and entered the town of Mauilla.

So soon as the advance and the rear of the force were come up, the Governor commanded that all the best armed should dismount, of which he made four squadrons of footmen. The Indians, observing how he was going on arranging his men, urged the cacique to leave, telling him, as was afterwards made known by some women who were taken in the town, that as he was but one man, and could fight but as one only, there being many chiefs present very skilful and experienced in matters of war, any one of whom was able to command the rest, and as things in war were so subject to fortune, that it was never certain which side would overcome the other, they wished him to put his person in safety; for if they should conclude their lives there, on which they had resolved rather than surrender, he would remain to govern the land: but for all that they said, he did not wish to go, until, from being continually urged, with fifteen or twenty of his own people he went out of the town, taking with him a scarlet cloak and other articles of the Catholics' clothing, being whatever he could carry and that seemed best to him.

The Governor, informed that the Indians were leaving the town, commanded the cavalry to surround it; and into each squadron of foot he put a soldier, with a brand, to set fire to the houses, that the Indians might have no shelter. His men being placed in full concert, he ordered an arquebuse to be shot off: at the signal the four squadrons, at their proper points, commenced a furious onset, and, both sides severely suffering, the Catholics entered the town.

The friar, the priest, and the rest who were with them in the house, were all saved, though at the cost of the lives of two brave and very able men who went thither to their rescue. The Indians fought with so great spirit that they many times drove our people back out of the town. The struggle lasted so long that many Spainards, weary and very thirsty, went to drink at a pond near by, tinged with the blood of the killed, and returned to the combat.

The Governor, witnessing this, with those who followed him in the returning charge of the footmen, entered the town on horseback, which gave opportunity to fire the dwellings; then breaking in upon the Indians and beating them down, they fled out of the place, the cavalry and infantry driving them back through the gates, where, losing the hope of escape, they fought valiantly;

and the Catholics getting among them with cutlasses, they found themselves met on all sides by their strokes, when many, dashing headlong into the flaming houses, were smothered, and, heaped one upon another, burned to death. They who perished there were in all two thousand five hundred, a few more or less: of the Spainards there fell eighteen, among whom was Don Carlos, brother-in-law of the Governor; one Juan de Gamez, a nephew; Men. Rodriguez, a Portuguese; and Juan Vazquez, of Villanueva de Barcarota, men of condition and courage; the rest were infantry. Of the living, one hundred and fifty Catholics had received seven hundred wounds from the arrow. Twelve horses died, and seventy were hurt. The clothing the Catholics carried with them, the ornaments for saying mass, and the pearls, were all burned there; they having set the fire themselves, because they considered the loss less than the injury they might receive of the Indians from within the houses, where they had brought the things together. The Governor learning in Mauilla that Francisco Maldonado was waiting for him in the port of Ochuse, six days' travel distant, he caused Juan Ortiz to keep the news secret, that he might not be interrupted in his purpose; because the pearls he wished to send to Cuba for show, that their fame might raise the desire of coming to Florida, had been lost, and he feared that, hearing of him without seeing either gold or silver, or other thing of value from that land, it would come to have such reputation that no one would be found to go there when men should be wanted: so he determined to send no news of himself until he should have discovered a rich country.



***Battle of Mauvila
(or Mabila)***

***Alabama, October
1540 with Native
American war-
riors under Chief
Tuscaloosa.***

CHAPTER 20

How the Governor set out from Mauilla to Chicaça, and what befell him.

From the time the Governor arrived in Florida until he went from Mauilla, there died one hundred and two Spainards, some of sickness, others by the hand of the Indians. Because of the wounded, he stopped in that place twenty-eight days, all the time remaining out in the fields. The country was a rich soil, and well inhabited: some towns were very large, and were picketed about. The people were numerous everywhere, the dwellings standing a cross-bow-shot or two apart.

On Sunday, the eighteenth of November, (**Note** *This should be the fourteenth, according to Rodrigo Ranjel.*) the sick being found to be getting on well, the Governor left Mauilla, taking with him a supply of maize for two days. He marched five days through a wilderness, arriving in a province called Pafallaya, at the town Taliepataua; and thence he went to another, named Cabusto, near which was a large river, whence the Indians on the farther bank shouted to the Catholics that they would kill them should they come over there. He ordered the building of a piragua within the town, that the natives might have no knowledge of it; which being finished in four days, and ready, he directed it to be taken on sleds half a league up stream, and in the morning thirty men entered it, well armed. The Indians discovering what was going on, they who were nearest went to oppose the landing, and did the best they could; but the Spainards drawing near, and the piragua being about to reach the shore, they fled into some cane-brakes. The men on horses went up the river to secure a landing-place, to which the Governor passed over, with the others that remained. Some of the towns were well stored with maize and beans.

Thence towards Chicaça the Governor marched five days through a desert, and arrived at a river, (**Note** *The east side of the Tombigbee River*) on the farther side of which were Indians, who wished to arrest his passage. In two days another piragua was made, and when ready he sent an Indian in it to the cacique, to say, that if he wished his friendship he should quietly wait for him; but they killed the messenger before his eyes, and with loud yells departed. He crossed the river the seventeenth of December, and arrived the same day at Chicaça, a small town of twenty houses. There the people underwent severe cold, for it was already winter, and snow fell: the greater number were then lying in the fields, it being before they had time to put up habitations.

The land was thickly inhabited, the people living about over it as they do in Mauilla; and as it was fertile, the greater part being under cultivation, there was plenty of maize. So much grain was brought together as was needed for getting through with the season.

Some Indians were taken, among whom was one the cacique greatly esteemed. The Governor sent an Indian to the cacique to say, that he desired to see him and have his friendship. He came, and offered him the services of his person, territories, and subjects: he said that he would cause two chiefs to visit him in peace. In a few days he returned with them, they bringing their Indians. They presented the Governor one hundred and fifty rabbits, with clothing of the country, such as shawls and skins. The name of the one was Alimamu, of the other Nicalasa.

The cacique of Chicaça came to visit him many times: on some occasions he was sent for, and a horse taken, on which to bring and carry him back. He made complaint that a vassal of his had risen against him, withholding tribute; and he asked for assistance, desiring to seek him in his territory, and give him the chastisement he deserved.

The whole was found to be feigned, to the end that, while the Governor should be absent with him, and the force divided, they would attack the parts separately—some the one under him, others the other, that remained in Chicaça. He went to the town where he lived, and came back with two hundred Indians, bearing bows and arrows.

The Governor, taking thirty cavalry and eighty infantry, marched to Saquechuma, the province of the chief whom the cacique said had rebelled. The town was untenanted, and the Indians, for greater dissimulation, set fire to it; but the people with the Governor being very careful and vigilant, as were also those that had been left in Chicaça, no enemy dared to fall upon them.

The Governor invited the caciques and some chiefs to dine with him, giving them pork to eat, which they so relished, although not used to it, that every night Indians would come up to some houses where the hogs slept, a cross-bow-shot off from the camp, to kill and carry away what they could of them.

Three were taken in the act: two the Governor commanded to be slain with arrows, and the remaining one, his hands having first been cut off, was sent to the cacique, who appeared grieved that they had given offence, and glad that they were punished.



De Soto had the hands of Chickasaw Indians cut off for trying to take a hog.

This chief was half a league from where the Catholics were, in an open country, whither wandered off four of the cavalry: Francisco Osorio, Reynoso, a servant of the Marquis of Astorga, and two servants of the Governor,—the one Ribera, his page, the other Fuentes, his chamberlain. They took some skins and shawls from the Indians, who made great outcry in consequence, and abandoned their houses.

When the Governor heard of it, he ordered them to be apprehended, and condemned Osorio and Fuentes to death, as principals, and all of them to lose their goods. The friars, the priests, and other principal personages solicited him to let Osorio live, and moderate the sentence; but he would do so for no one. When about ordering them to be taken to the town-yard to be beheaded, some Indians arrived, sent by the chief to complain of them.

Juan Ortiz, at the entreaty of Baltasar de Gallegos and others, changed their words, telling the Governor, as from the cacique, that he had understood those Spainards had been arrested on his account; that they were in no fault,

having offended him in nothing, and that if he would do him a favor, to let them go free: then Ortiz said to the Indians, that the Governor had the persons in custody, and would visit them with such punishment as should be an example to the rest. The prisoners were ordered to be released.

So soon as March had come, the Governor, having determined to leave Chicaça, asked two hundred tamemes of the cacique, who told him that he would confer with his chiefs. Tuesday, the eighth, he went where the cacique was, to ask for the carriers, and was told that he would send them the next day. When the Governor saw the chief, he said to Luis de Moscoso that the Indians did not appear right to him; that a very careful watch should be kept that night, to which the master of the camp paid little attention.

At four o'clock in the morning the Indians fell upon them in four squadrons, from as many quarters, and directly as they were discovered, they beat a drum. With loud shouting, they came in such haste, that they entered the camp at the same moment with some scouts that had been out; of which, by the time those in the town were aware, half the houses were in flames. That night it had been the turn of three horsemen to be of the watch,—two of them men of low degree, the least value of any in the camp, and the third a nephew of the Governor, who had been deemed a brave man until now, when he showed himself as great a coward as either of the others; for they all fled, and the Indians, finding no resistance, came up and set fire to the place.

They waited outside of the town for the Spainards, behind the gates, as they should come out of the doors, having had no opportunity to put on their arms; and as they ran in all directions, bewildered by the noise, blinded by the smoke and the brightness of the flame, knowing not whither they were going, nor were able to find their arms, or put saddles on their steeds, they saw not the Indians who shot arrows at them. Those of the horses that could break their halters got away, and many were burned to death in the stalls.

The confusion and rout were so great that each man fled by the way that first opened to him, there being none to oppose the Indians. The Governor, with a soldier named Tapia, alone got mounted, and, charging upon the Indians, he struck down the first of them he met with a blow of the lance, but went over with the saddle, because in the haste it had not been tightly drawn, and he fell. The men on foot, running to a thicket outside of the town, came together there: the Indians imagining, as it was dark, that the horses were cavalry coming upon them, as has been stated, they fled, leaving only one dead, which was he the Governor smote.

The town lay in cinders. A woman, with her husband, having left a house, went back to get some pearls that had remained there; and when she would have come out again the fire had reached the door, and she could not, neither could her husband assist her, so she was consumed.

Three Spainards came out of the fire in so bad plight, that one of them died in three days from that time, and the two others for a long while were carried in their pallets, on poles borne on the shoulders of Indians, for otherwise they could not have got along. There died in this affair eleven Spainards and fifty horses. One hundred of the swine remained, four hundred having been destroyed, from the conflagration of Mauilla.

If, by good luck, any one had been able to save a garment until then, it was there destroyed. Many remained naked, not having had time to catch up their skin dresses. In that place they suffered greatly from cold, the only relief being in large fires, and they passed the night long in turning, without the power to sleep; for as one side of a man would warm, the other would freeze.

Some contrived mats of dried grass sewed together, one to be placed below, and the other above them: many who laughed at this expedient were afterwards compelled to do the like. The Spainards were left so broken up, that what with the want of the saddles and arms which had been destroyed, had the Indians returned the second night, they might, with little effort, have been overpowered. They removed from that town to the one where the cacique was accustomed to live, because it was in the open field. In eight days' time they had constructed many saddles from the ash, and likewise lances, as good as those made in Biscay.

CHAPTER 21

How the Indians returned to attack the Spainards, and how the Governor went to Alimamu, and they tarried to give him battle in the way.

On Wednesday, the fifteenth day of March, in the year 1541, eight days having passed since the Governor had been living on a plain, half a league from the place where he wintered, after he had set up a forge, and tempered the swords which in Chicaça had been burned, and already had made many targets, saddles, and lances, on Tuesday, at four o'clock in the morning, while it was still dark, there came many Indians, formed in three squadrons, each from a different direction, to attack the camp, when those who watched beat to arms.

In all haste he drew up his men in three squadrons also, and leaving some for the defence of the camp, he went out to meet them. The Indians were overthrown and put to flight. The ground was plain, and in a condition advantageous to the Spainards. It was now daybreak; and but for some disorder, thirty or forty more enemies might have been slain. It was caused by a friar raising great shouts in the camp, without any reason, crying, "To the camp! To the camp!" In consequence the Governor and the rest went thither, and the Indians had time to get away in safety.

From some prisoners taken, the Governor informed himself of the region in advance. On the twenty-fifth day of April he left Chicaça and went to sleep at a small town called Alimamu. Very little maize was found; and as it became necessary to attempt thence to pass a desert, seven days' journey in extent, the next day the Governor ordered that three captains, each with cavalry and foot, should take a different direction, to get provision for the way.

Juan de Añasco, the comptroller, went with fifteen horse and forty foot on the course the Governor would have to march, and found a staked fort, (**Note** *This fort and ford were on the Tallahatchie River, and probably at or near New Albany, in Union County, Mississippi. From here the army turned to the westward*) where the Indians were awaiting them. Many were armed, walking upon it, with their bodies, legs, and arms painted and ochred, red, black, white, yellow, and vermilion in stripes, so that they appeared to have on stockings and doublet. Some wore feathers, and others horns on the head, the face blackened, and the eyes encircled with vermilion, to heighten their fierce aspect.

So soon as they saw the Spainards draw nigh they beat drums, and, with loud yells, in great fury came forth to meet them. As to Juan de Añasco and others it appeared well to avoid them and to inform the Governor, they retired over an even ground in sight, the distance of a crossbow-shot from the enclosure, the footmen, the crossbowmen, and targeteers putting themselves before those on horseback, that the beasts might not be wounded by the Indians, who came forth by sevens and eights to discharge their bows at them and retire. In sight of the Spainards they made a fire, and, taking an Indian by the head and feet, pretended to give him many blows on the head and cast him into the flames, signifying in this way what they would do with the Catholics.

A message being sent with three of the cavalry to the Governor, informing him of this, he came directly. It was his opinion that they should be driven from the place. He said that if this was not done they would be emboldened to make an attack at some other time, when they might do him more harm: those on horseback were commanded to dismount, and, being set in four squadrons, at the signal charged the Indians.

They resisted until the Catholics came up to the stakes; then, seeing that they could not defend themselves, they fled through that part near which passed a stream, sending back some arrows from the other bank; and because, at the moment, no place was found where the horses might ford, they had time to make their escape. Three Indians were killed and many Spainards wounded, of whom, after a few days, fifteen died on the march.

Every one thought the Governor committed a great fault in not sending to examine the state of the ground on the opposite shore, and discover the crossing-place before making the attack; because, with the hope the Indians had of escaping unseen in that direction, they fought until they were broken; and it was the cause of their holding out so long to assail the Spainards, as they could, with safety to themselves.

CHAPTER 22

How the Governor went from Quizquiz, and thence to the River Grande.

Three days having gone by since some maize had been sought after, and but little found in comparison with the great want there was of it, the Governor became obliged to move at once, notwithstanding the wounded had need of repose, to where there should be abundance. He accordingly set out for Quizquiz, and marched seven days through a wilderness, having many pondy places, with thick forests, all fordable, however, on horseback, except some basins or lakes that were swum. He arrived at a town of Quizquiz without being descried, and seized all the people before they could come out of their houses. Among them was the mother of the cacique; and the Governor sent word to him, by one of the captives, to come and receive her, with the rest he had taken. The answer he returned was, that if his lordship would order them to be loosed and sent, he would come to visit and do him service.

The Governor, since his men arrived weary, and likewise weak, for want of maize, and the horses were also lean, determined to yield to the requirement and try to have peace; so the mother and the rest were ordered to be set free, and with words of kindness were dismissed. The next day, while he was hoping to see the chief, many Indians came, with bows and arrows, to set upon the Spainards, when he commanded that all the armed horsemen should be mounted and in readiness.

Finding them prepared, the Indians stopped at the distance of a crossbow-shot from where the Governor was, near a river-bank, where, after remaining quietly half an hour, six chiefs arrived at the camp, stating that they had come to find out what people it might be; for that they had knowledge from their ancestors that they were to be subdued by a white race; they consequently desired to return to the cacique, to tell him that he should come presently to obey and serve the Governor. After presenting six or seven skins and shawls brought with them, they took their leave, and returned with the others who were waiting for them by the shore. The cacique came not, nor sent another message.

There was little maize in the place, and the Governor moved to another town, half a league from the great river, where it was found in sufficiency. He went to look at the river, and saw that near it there was much timber of which piraguas might be made, and a good situation in which the camp might be

placed. He directly moved, built houses, and settled on a plain a crossbow-shot from the water, bringing together there all the maize of the towns behind, that at once they might go to work and cut down trees for sawing out planks to build barges. The Indians soon came from up the stream, jumped on shore, and told the Governor that they were the vassals of a great lord, named Aquixo, who was the suzerain of many towns and people on the other shore; and they made known from him, that he would come the day after, with all his people, to hear what his lordship would command him.

The next day the cacique arrived, with two hundred canoes filled with men, having weapons. They were painted with ochre, wearing great bunches of white and other plumes of many colors, having feathered shields in their hands, with which they sheltered the oarsmen on either side, the warriors standing erect from bow to stern, holding bows and arrows.



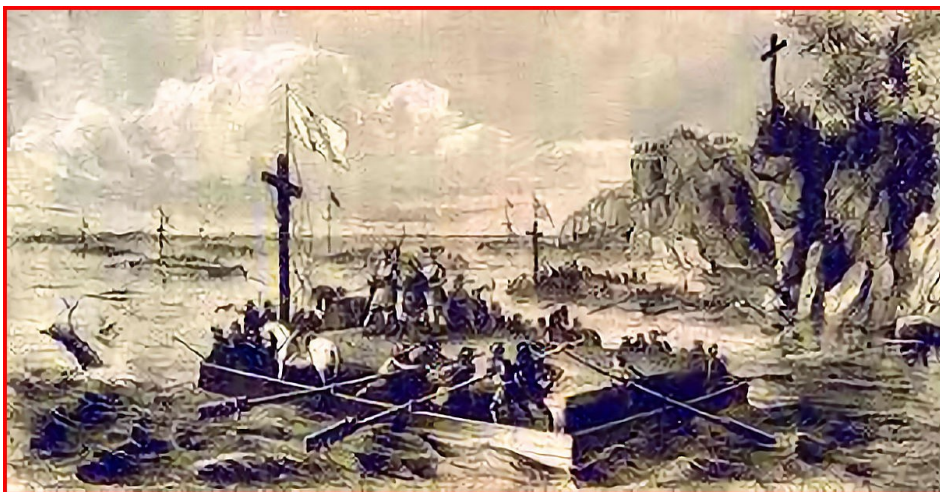
The barge in which the cacique came had an awning at the poop, under which he sate; and the like had the barges of the other chiefs; and there, from under the canopy, where the chief man was, the course was directed and orders issued to the rest. All came down together, and arrived within a stone's cast of the ravine, whence the cacique said to the Governor, who was walking along the river-bank, with others who bore him company, that he had come to visit, serve, and obey him; for he had heard that he was the greatest of lords, the most powerful on all the earth, and that he must see what he would have him do.

The Governor expressed his pleasure, and besought him to land, that they might the better confer; but the chief gave no reply, ordering three barges to draw near, wherein was great quantity of fish, and loaves like bricks, made of the pulp of plums (persimmons), which de Soto receiving, gave him thanks and again entreated him to land.

Making the gift had been a pretext, to discover if any harm might be done; but, finding the Governor and his people on their guard, the cacique began to draw off from the shore, when the crossbowmen who were in readiness, with loud cries shot at the Indians, and struck down five or six of them. They retired with great order, not one leaving the oar, even though the one next to him might have fallen, and covering themselves, they withdrew. Afterwards they came many times and landed; when approached, they would go back to their barges. These were fine-looking men, very large and well formed; and what with the awnings, the plumes, and the shields, the pennons, and the number of people in the fleet, it appeared like a famous armada of galleys.

During the thirty days that were passed there, four piraguas were built, into three of which, one morning, three hours before daybreak, the Governor ordered twelve cavalry to enter, four in each, men in whom he had confidence that they would gain the land notwithstanding the Indians, and secure the passage, or die: he also sent some crossbowmen of foot with them, and in the other piragua, oarsmen, to take them to the opposite shore. He ordered Juan de Guzman to cross with the infantry, of which he had remained captain in the place of Francisco Maldonado; and because the current was stiff, they went up along the side of the river a quarter of a league, and in passing over they were carried down, so as to land opposite the camp; but, before arriving there, at twice the distance of a stone's cast, the horsemen rode out from the piraguas to an open area of hard and even ground, which they all reached without accident.

So soon as they had come to shore the piraguas returned; and when the sun was up two hours high, the people had all got over. The distance was near half a league: a man standing on the shore could not be told, whether he were a man or something else, from the other side. The stream was swift, and very deep; the water, always flowing turbidly, brought along from above many trees and much timber, driven onward by its force. There were many fish of several sorts, the greater part differing from those of the fresh waters of Spain, as will be told hereafter.



CROSSING THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

CHAPTER 23

How the Governor went from Aquixo to Casqui, and thence to Pacaha; and how this country differs from the other.

The Rio Grande being crossed, the Governor marched a league and a half, to a large town of Aquixo, which was abandoned before his arrival. Over a plain thirty Indians were seen to draw nigh, sent by the cacique to discover what the Spainards intended to do, but who fled directly as they saw them. The Catholics pursued, killed ten, and captured fifteen. As the town toward which the Governor marched was near the river, he sent a captain, with the force he thought sufficient, to take the piraguas up the stream.

As they frequently wound about through the country, having to go round the bays that swell out of the river, the Indians had opportunity to attack those in the piraguas, placing them in great peril, being shot at with bows from the ravines, while they dared not leave the shore, because of the swiftness of the current; so that, as soon as the Governor got to the town, he directly sent crossbowmen to them down the stream, for their protection. When the piraguas arrived, he ordered them to be taken to pieces, and the spikes kept for making others, when they should be needed.

The Governor slept at the town one night, and the day following he went in quest of a province called Pacaha, which he had been informed was nigh Chisca, where the Indians said there was gold. He passed through large towns in Aquixo, which the people had left for fear of the Catholics. From some Indians that were taken, he heard that three days' journey thence resided a great cacique, called Casqui. He came to a small river, over which a bridge was made, whereby he crossed.

All that day, until sunset, he marched through water, in places coming to the knees; in others, as high as the waist. They were greatly rejoiced on reaching the dry land; because it had appeared to them that they should travel about, lost, all night in the water. At mid-day they came to the first town of Casqui, where they found the Indians off their guard, never having heard of them. Many men and women were captured, much clothing, blankets, and skins stolen; such they likewise took by force in another town in sight of the first, half a league off in the field, whither the horsemen had run.

This land is higher, drier, and more level than any other along the river that had been seen until then. In the fields were many walnut-trees, bearing tender-shelled nuts in the shape of acorns, many being found stored in the houses. The tree did not differ in any thing from that of Spain, nor from the one seen before, except the leaf was smaller. There were many mulberry-trees, and trees of plums (persimmons), having fruit of vermilion hue, like one of Spain, while others were gray, differing, but far better. All the trees, the year round, were as green as if they stood in orchards, and the woods were open.

The Governor marched two days through the country of Casqui, before coming to the town where the cacique was, the greater part of the way lying through fields thickly set with great towns, two or three of them to be seen from one. He sent word by an Indian to the cacique, that he was coming to obtain his friendship and to consider him as a brother; to which he received for answer, that he would be welcomed; that he would be received with special good-will, and all that his lordship required of him should be done; and the chief sent him on the road a present of skins, shawls, and fish. After these gifts were made, all the towns into which the Governor came were found occupied; and the inhabitants awaited him in peace, offering him skins, shawls, and fish.

Accompanied by many persons, the cacique came half a league on the road from the town where he dwelt to receive the Governor, and, drawing nigh to him, thus spoke:

Very High, Powerful, and Renowned Master: I greet your coming. So soon as I had notice of you, your power and perfections, although you entered my territory capturing and killing the dwellers upon it, who are my vassals, I determined to conform my wishes to your will, and hold as right all that you might do, believing that it should be so for a good reason, providing against some future event, to you perceptible but from me concealed; since an evil may well be permitted to avoid another greater, that good can arise, which I trust will be so; for from so excellent a prince, no bad motive is to be suspected. My ability is so small to serve you, according to your great merit, that though you should consider even my abundant will and humility in proffering you all manner of services, I must still deserve little in your sight. If this ability can with reason be valued, I pray you receive it, and with it my country and my vassals, of me and them disposing at your pleasure; for though you were lord of the earth, with no more good-will would you be received, served, and obeyed.

The Governor responded appropriately in a few words which satisfied the chief. Directly they fell to making each other great proffers, using much courtesy, the cacique inviting the Governor to go and take lodging in his houses. He excused himself, the better to preserve peace, saying that he wished to lie in the field; and, because the heat was excessive, he pitched the camp among some trees, quarter of a league from the town. The cacique went to his town, and returned with many Indians singing, who, when they had come to where the Governor was, all prostrated themselves. Among them were two blind men. The cacique made an address, of which, as it was long, I will give the substance in a few words. He said, that inasmuch as the Governor was son of the Sun, he begged him to restore sight to those Indians: whereupon the blind men arose, and they very earnestly entreated him to do so. Soto answered them, that in the heavens above there was One who had the power to make them whole, and do whatever they could ask of Him, whose servant he was; that this great Lord made the sky and the earth, and man after His image; that He had suffered on the tree of the true cross to save the human race, and risen from the grave on the third day,—what of man there was of Him dying, what of divinity being immortal; and that, having ascended into heaven, He was there with open arms to receive all that would be converted to Him. He then directed a lofty cross of wood to be made and set up in the highest part of the town, declaring to the cacique that the Catholics worshipped that. He placed himself with his people before it, on their knees, which the Indians did likewise; and he told them that from that time thenceforth they should thus worship, of whom he had spoken to them, that was in the skies, asking Him for whatsoever they stood in need of.

The chief being asked what was the distance to Pacaha, he answered that it was one day's journey, and said that on the extreme of his territory there was a lake, like an estuary, that entered into the Rio Grande, to which he would send persons in advance to build a bridge, whereby they might pass over it. The night of the day the Governor left, he slept at a town of Casqui; and the next day he passed in sight of two other towns, and arrived at the lake, which was half a crossbow-shot over, of great depth and swiftness of current. The Indians had just got the bridge done as he came up. It was built of wood, in the manner of timber thrown across from tree to tree; on one side there being a rail of poles, higher than the rest, as a support for those who should pass. The cacique of Casqui having come with his people, the Governor sent word by an Indian to the cacique of Pacaha, that though he might be at enmity with him of Casqui, and that chief be present, he should receive neither injury nor

insult, provided that he attended in peace and desired his friendship, for as a brother would he treat him. The Indian went as he was bid, and returned, stating that the cacique took no notice of the message, but that he fled out of the town, from the back part, with all his people. Then the Governor entered there, and with the cavalry charged in the direction the Indians were running, and at another town, a quarter of a league off, many were captured. As fast as they were captured, the horsemen delivered them to the Indians of Casqui, who, from being their enemies, brought them with great heed and pleasure to the town where the Catholics were, greatly regretting that they had not the liberty to kill them. Many shawls, deer-skins, lion and bear-skins, and many cat-skins were found in the town. Numbers who had been a long time badly covered, there clothed themselves. Of the shawls they made mantles and cassocks; some made gowns and lined them with cat-skins, as they also did the cassocks. Of the deer-skins were made jerkins, shirts, stockings, and shoes: and from the bear-skins they made very good cloaks, such as no water could get through. They found shields of raw cowhide out of which armor was made for the horses.



Pacaha Village

The initial encounter between the Pacaha and the de Soto expedition was violent. Chief Pacaha's tribe had been at war for some time with a neighboring chieftain named Casqui. Many of the Pacaha, seeing the approach of the Casqui and the Spainards, attempted to flee to an island in the river and drowned.

CHAPTER 24

Of how the cacique of Pacaha came in peace, and he of Casqui having absented himself, returned to excuse his conduct; and how the Governor made friendship between the chiefs.

On Wednesday, the nineteenth day of June, the Governor entered Pacaha, and took quarters in the town where the cacique was accustomed to reside. It was enclosed and very large. In the towers and the palisade were many loopholes. There was much dry maize, and the new was in great quantity, throughout the fields. At the distance of half a league to a league off were large towns, all of them surrounded with stockades.

Where the Governor stayed was a great lake, near to the enclosure; and the water entered a ditch that well-nigh went round the town. From the River Grande to the lake was a canal, through which the fish came into it, and where the chief kept them for his eating and pastime. With nets that were found in the place, as many were taken as need required; and however much might be the casting, there was never any lack of them. In the many other lakes about were also many fish, though the flesh was soft, and none of it so good as that which came from the river. The greater number differ from those in the fresh water of Spain. There was a fish called bagre, the third part of which was head, with gills from end to end, and along the sides were great spines, like very sharp awls. Those of this sort that lived in the lake were as big as pike; in the river were some that weighed from one hundred to one hundred and fifty pounds. Many were taken with the hook. There was one in the shape of barbel; another like bream, with the head of a hake, having a color between red and brown, and was the most esteemed. There was likewise a kind called peel-fish, the snout a cubit in length, the upper lip being shaped like a shovel. Another fish was like a shad. Except the bagres and the peel, they were all of scale. There was one, called pereio, the Indians sometimes brought, the size of a hog, and had rows of teeth above and below.

The cacique of Casqui many times sent large presents of fish, shawls, and skins. Having told the Governor that he would deliver into his hands the cacique of Pacaha, he went to Casqui, and ordered many canoes to ascend the river, while he should march by land, taking many of his warriors. The Governor, with forty cavalry and sixty infantry, was conducted by him up stream; and the Indians who were in the canoes discovered the cacique of Pacaha on an islet between two arms of the river.

Five Catholics entered a canoe, of whom was Don Antonio Osorio, to go in advance and see what number of people the cacique had with him. There were five or six thousand souls, of whom, directly as they saw the people, taking the Indians who went in the canoes to be Catholics also, the cacique and as many as could get into three canoes that were there, fled to the opposite bank; the greater part of the rest, in terror and confusion, plunging into the river to swim, many, mostly women and infants, got drowned. Then the Governor, who was on land, without knowing what was passing with Don Antonio and those who accompanied him, ordered the Catholics, in all haste, to enter the canoes with the Indians of Casqui, and they directly joining Don Antonio on the islet, many men and women were taken, and much clothing.

Many clothes, which the Indians had in cane hurdles and on rafts to carry over, floated down stream, the people of Casqui filling their canoes with them; and, in fear that the Catholics might take these away, their chief went off with them down the river to his territory, without taking leave. At this the Governor became indignant, and directly returning to Pacaha, two leagues on the road, he overran the country of Casqui, capturing twenty or thirty of its men. The horses being tired, and there remaining no time that day to go farther, he went on to Pacaha, with the intention of marching in three or four days upon Casqui, directly letting loose a man of Pacaha, sending word by him to its chief, that should he wish his friendship he should come to him, and together they would go to carry war upon Casqui: and immediately there arrived many people of Pacaha, bringing as the chief an Indian, who was exposed by a prisoner, brother of the cacique. The Governor told them that their lord must come; that he well knew that Indian was not he; for that nothing could be done without its being known to him before they so much as thought of it. The cacique came the next day, followed by many Indians, with a large gift of fish, skins, and shawls. He made a speech, that all were glad to hear, and concluded by saying, that although his lordship had causelessly inflicted injury on his country and his subjects, he did not any the less cease to be his, and was always at his command. The Governor ordered his brother to be let go, and some principal men he held captives. That day a messenger arrived from Casqui, saying that his master would come early on the morrow to excuse the error he had committed in going away without his licence; to which the Governor bade him say, in return, to the cacique, that if he did not come himself in person he would go after him, and inflict the punishment he deserved.

The chief of Casqui came the next day, and after presenting many shawls, skins, and fish, he gave the Governor a daughter, saying that his greatest desire was to unite his blood with that of so great a lord as he was, begging that he would take her to wife. He made a long and discreet oration, full of praise of de Soto; and concluded by asking his forgiveness, for the love of that cross he had left, for having gone off without his permission; that he had done so because of the shame he felt for what his people had done without his consent. The Governor said that he had taken a good sponsor; that he had himself determined, if the cacique had not come to apologize, to go after him and burn his towns, kill him and his people, and lay waste his country. To this the chief replied:

Master: I and mine belong to you; and my territory is yours, so that you will destroy it, if you will, as your own, and your people you will slay. All that falls from your hand I shall receive as from my lord's, and as merited chastisement. Know, that the service you have done me in leaving that cross has been signal, and more than I have deserved; for, you know, of great droughts the maize in our fields was perishing, and no sooner had I and mine thrown ourselves on our knees before it, asking for water, than the want was supplied.

The Governor made friendship between the chiefs of Casqui and Pacaha, and placed them at the table, that they should eat with him. They had a difficulty as to who should sit at his right hand, which the Governor quieted by telling them that among the Christians the one seat was as good as the other; that they should so consider it, and while with him no one should understand otherwise, each taking the seat he first came to. Thence he sent thirty horsemen and fifty footmen to the province of Caluça, to see if in that direction they could turn back towards Chisca, where the Indians said there was a foundry of gold and copper. They travelled seven days through desert, and returned in great extremity, eating green plums (persimmons) and maize-stalks, which they had found in a poor town of seven or eight houses. The Indians stated that thence towards the north, the country, being very cold, was very thinly populated; that cattle were in such plenty, no maize-field could be protected from them, and the inhabitants lived upon the meat. Seeing that the country was so poorly off for maize that there could be no support, the Governor asked the Indians in what direction there were most inhabitants; and they said that they had knowledge of a large province and a country of great abundance, called Quiguate, that lay in the southern direction.

CHAPTER 25

How the Governor went from Pacaha to Aquiguate and to Coligoa, and came to Cayas.

The Governor rested in Pacaha forty days, during which time the two caciques made him presents of fish, shawls, and skins, in great quantity, each striving to outdo the other in the magnitude of the gifts. At the time of his departure, the chief of Pacaha bestowed on him two of his sisters, telling him that they were tokens of love, for his remembrance, to be his wives. The name of one was Macanoche, that of the other Mochila. They were symmetrical, tall, and full: Macanoche bore a pleasant expression; in her manners and features appeared the lady; the other was robust. The cacique of Casqui ordered the bridge to be repaired; and the Governor, returning through his territory, lodged in the field near his town. He brought there much fish, exchanged two women for as many shirts with two of the Spainards, and furnished a guide and tamemes. The Governor marched to one of his towns, and slept, and the next night came to another that was near a river, where he ordered him to bring canoes, that he might cross over. There taking his leave, the chief went back.

The Governor travelled towards Aquiguate, (**Note** *This place was on the west side of the St. Francis River, in the northern part of Lee County or the southern part of St. Francis County, Arkansas.*) and on the fourth day of August came to the residence of the cacique, who, although he had sent him a present, on the road, of many shawls and skins, abandoned the place through fear on his arrival. That town was the largest seen: one-half of it was occupied by the Governor and his people; and, after a few days, discovering that the Indians were dealing in falsehoods, he ordered the other part to be burned, that it might not afford them cover should they attack him at night, nor be an embarrassment to his cavalry in a movement to repel them. An Indian having come, attended by a multitude, declaring himself to be the cacique, the Governor delivered him over to be looked after by his body-guard. Many of the Indians went off, and returned with shawls and skins; but, finding small opportunity for carrying out their evil plan, one day the pretended cacique, walking out of the house with the Governor, ran away with such swiftness that not one of the Spainards could overtake him; and plunging into the river, at the distance of a crossbow-shot from the town, he made for the other shore, where many Indians, giving loud shouts, began to make use of their arrows.

The Governor directly crossed over to attack them with horse and foot; but they dared not await him: following them up, he came to a town that was abandoned, before which there was a lake the horses could not pass over, and on the other side were many females. The footmen having crossed, capturing many of them, stole much clothing. Returning to the camp early in the night, the sentinels seized a spy, who assenting to the request to lead to where the cacique was, the Governor directly set out with twenty cavalry and fifty infantry in quest of him. After travelling a day and a half, they found him in a thick wood; and a soldier, ignorant of who he was, having struck him on the head with a cutlass, he called out not to kill him, that he was the chief; so he was captured, and with him one hundred and forty of his people.

The Governor, returning to Quiguat, directed him to tell his people to come and serve the Catholics; but, after waiting some days, in the hope of their arrival, and finding that they did not come, he sent two captains, each on an opposite side of the river, with infantry and cavalry, whereby many of both sexes were made prisoners. The Indians, seeing the harm that they received for their rebellious conduct, waited on the Governor to take his commands, coming and going often, bringing with them presents of fish. The cacique and two of his wives being at their liberty in the quarters of the Governor, which were guarded by his halberdiers, he asked them what part of the country was most inhabited; to which they replied, that to the south, or down the river, where were large towns, and the caciques governed wide territories, with numerous people; and that to the northwest was a province, near some mountains, called Coligoa. He, with the others, deemed it well to go thither first; saying that the mountains, perhaps, would make a difference in the soil, and that silver and gold might afterward follow.

The country of Aquiguat, like that of Casqui and Pacaha, was level and fertile, having rich river margins, on which the Indians made extensive fields. From Tascaluca to the River Grande may be three hundred leagues; a region very low, having many lakes: from Pacaha to Quiguat there may be one hundred and ten leagues. There he left the cacique in his own town; and an Indian guided them through an immense pathless thicket of desert for seven days, where they slept continually in ponds and shallow puddles. Fish were so plentiful in them that they were killed with blows of cudgels; and as the Indians travelled in chains, they disturbed the mud at the bottom, by which the fish, becoming stupefied, would swim to the surface, when as many were taken as were desired.

The inhabitants of Coligoa had never heard of the Spainards, and when these got so near their town as to be seen, they fled up stream along a river that passed near by there; some throwing themselves into the water, whence they were taken by their pursuers, who, on either bank, captured many of both sexes, and the cacique with the rest. Three days from that time came many Indians, by his order, with offerings of shawls, deer-skins, and two cowhides: they stated that at the distance of five or six leagues towards the north were many cattle, where the country, being cold, was thinly inhabited; and that, to the best of their knowledge, the province that was better provisioned than any other, and more populous, was one to the south, called Cayas.

About forty leagues from Quiguate stood Coligoa, (**Note** Coligoa was in the valley of Little Red River, and before arriving there, they crossed White River below the mouth of Little Red River, in Woodruff County, Arkansas.) at the foot of a mountain, in the vale of a river of medium size, like the Caya, a stream that passes through Estremadura. The soil was rich, yielding maize in such profusion that the old was thrown out of store to make room for the new grain. Beans and pumpkins were likewise in great plenty: both were larger and better than those of Spain: the pumpkins, when roasted, have nearly the taste of chestnuts. The cacique continued behind in his own town, having given a guide for the way to Cayas.

We travelled five days, and came to the province of Palisema. The cacique had left a token of peace, though still he did not dare to await his coming. The Governor sent a captain with horse and foot to look after him; because of the roughness of the country, only a few men and boys were captured.

Directly the Governor set forward and came to Tatalicoya, whence he took the cacique, who guided him to Cayas, a distance of four days' journey from that town. When he arrived and saw the scattered houses, he thought, from the information he had received of the great populousness of the country, that the cacique was lying to him—that it was not the province; and he threatened him, bidding him tell where he was. The chief, as likewise the other Indians taken near by, declared that to be in Cayas, the best town in all the province; and that although the houses were far apart, the country occupied being extensive, it had numerous people and many maize-fields. The town was called Tanico.^[294] The camp was placed in the best part of it, nigh a river. On the day of arrival, the Governor, with some mounted men, went a league farther, but found no one, and only some skins, which the cacique had put on the road to be taken, a sign of peace, by the usage of the country.

CHAPTER 26

How the Governor visited the province of Tulla, and what happened to him.

The Governor tarried a month in the province of Cayas. In this time the horses fattened and throve more than they had done at other places in a longer time, in consequence of the large quantity of maize there, The blade of it, I think, is the best fodder that grows. The beasts drank so copiously from the very warm and brackish lake, that they came having their bellies swollen with the leaf when they were brought back from watering. Till they reached that spot the Spainards had wanted salt: they now made a quantity and took it with them. The Indians carry it into other parts, to exchange for skins and shawls.

The salt is made along by a river, which, when the water goes down, leaves it upon the sand. As they cannot gather the salt without a large mixture of sand, it is thrown together into certain baskets they have for the purpose, made large at the mouth and small at the bottom. These are set in the air on a ridge-pole; and water being thrown on, vessels are placed under them wherein it may fall; then, being strained and placed on the fire, it is boiled away, leaving salt at the bottom.

The lands on the shores of the river were fields, and maize was in plenty. The Indians dared not cross the river to where we were. Some appearing, were called to by the soldiers who saw them, and having come over were conducted by them before the Governor. On being asked for the cacique, they said that he was peaceful but afraid to show himself. The Governor directly sent them back to tell him to come, and, if he desired his friendship, to bring an interpreter and a guide for the travel before them; that if he did not do so he would go in pursuit, when it would be the worse for him.

The Governor waited three days, and finding that the cacique did not come, he went in pursuit and brought him there a captive, with one hundred and fifty of his people. He asked him if he had knowledge of any great cacique, and in what direction the country was most inhabited. The Indian stated, that the largest population about there was that of a province lying to the southward, thence a day and a half's travel, called Tulla; that he could give him a guide, but no interpreter; that the tongue of that country was different from his, and that he and his ancestors had ever been at war with its chiefs, so that they neither conversed together nor understood each other.

Then the Governor, with cavalry and fifty infantry, directly set out for Tulla, to see if it were such a land as he might pass through with his troops. So soon as it became known that he had reached there, the inhabitants were summoned; and as they gathered by fifteen and twenty at a time, they would come to attack the Spainards. Finding that they were sharply handled, and that in running the horses would overtake them, they got upon the house-tops, where they endeavored to defend themselves with their bows and arrows.

When beaten off from one roof, they would get up on to another; and while the Spainards were going after some, others would attack them from an opposite direction. The struggle lasted so long that the steeds, becoming tired, could not be made to run. One horse was killed and others were wounded. Of the Indians fifteen were slain, and forty women and boys made prisoners; for to no one who could draw a bow and could be reached was his life spared him.

The Governor determined at once to go back, before the inhabitants should have time to come together. That afternoon, he set out, and travelling into the night, he slept on the road to avoid Tulla, and arrived the next day at Cayas. Three days later he marched to Tulla, bringing with him the cacique, among whose Indians he was unable to find one who spoke the language of that place.

He was three days on the way, and at his arrival found the town abandoned, the inhabitants not venturing to remain for him. But no sooner did they know that he was in the town, than, at four o'clock on the morning of the first night, they came upon him in two squadrons, from different directions, with bows and arrows and with long staves like pikes. So soon as they were felt, both cavalry and infantry turned out. Some Spainards and some horses were injured. Many of the Indians were killed.

Of those made captive, the Governor sent six to the cacique, their right hands and their noses cut off, with the message, that, if he did not come to him to apologize and render obedience, he would go in pursuit, and to him, and as many of his as he might find, would he do as he had done to those he sent. He allowed him three days in which to appear, making himself understood by signs, in the best manner possible, for want of an interpreter.

At the end of that time an Indian, bearing a back-load of cow-skins from the cacique, arrived, weeping with great sobs, and coming to where the Governor was, threw himself at his feet. De Soto raised him up, and the man made a speech, but there was none to understand him.

The Governor, by signs, told him to return and say to the cacique, that he must send him some one who could speak with the people of Cayas. Three Indians came the next day with loads of cow-skins, and three days afterward came twenty others.

Among them was one who understood those of Cayas. After a long oration from him, of apologies for the cacique and in praise of the Governor, he concluded by saying, that he with the others had come, in behalf of the chief, to inquire what his lordship would command, for that he was ready to serve him.

At hearing these words the Governor and the rest were all rejoiced; for in no way could they go on without a guide. He ordered the man to be safely kept, and told the Indians who came with him to go back to the cacique and say, that he forgave him the past and greatly thanked him for the interpreter and the presents; that he should be pleased to see him, and to come the next day, that they might talk together.

He came at the end of three days, and with him eighty Indians. As he and his men entered the camp they wept,—the token of obedience and the repentance of a past error, according to the usage of that country. He brought a present of many cow-skins, which were found very useful; the country being cold, they were taken for bed-covers, as they were very soft and the wool like that of sheep. Near by, to the northward, are many cattle.

The Spainards did not see them, nor go where they were, because it was a country thinly populated, having little maize. The cacique of Tulla made an address to the Governor, in which he apologized and offered him his country, his vassals, and his person. The speech of this cacique—like those of the other chiefs, and all the messengers in their behalf who came before the Governor—no orator could more elegantly phrase.

CHAPTER 27

How the Governor went from Tulla to Autiamque, for the winter.

The Governor informed himself of the country in every direction. He ascertained that toward the west there was a thin population, and to the southeast were great towns, principally in a province, abundant of maize, called Autiamque, at the distance of about eighty leagues, ten days' journey from Tulla. The winter was already come. The cold, rain, and snow did not permit the people to travel for two or three months in the year, and the Governor feared to remain among that sparse population, lest his force could not be subsisted for that length of time. Moreover, the Indians said that near Autiamque was a great water, which, from their account, appeared to him to be an arm of the sea. Hence, he determined to winter in that province, and in the following summer to go to the sea-side, where he would build two brigantines,—one to send to Cuba, the other to New Spain, that the arrival of either might bear tidings of him. Three years had elapsed since he had been heard of by Doña Ysabel, or by any person in a civilized community. Two hundred and fifty men of his were dead, likewise one hundred and fifty horses. He desired to recruit from Cuba of man and beast, calculating, out of his property there, to refit and again go back to advance, to discover and to conquer farther on towards the west, where he had not reached, and whither Cabeça de Vaca had wandered.

Having dismissed the caciques of Tulla and Cayas, the Governor took up his course, marching five days over very sharp mountains, and arrived in a peopled district called Quipana. Not a native could be captured, because of the roughness of the country, and the town was among ridges. At night an ambuscade was set, in which two men were captured, who said that Autiamque was six days' journey distant, and that there was another province toward the south, eight days' travel off, called Guahate, very abundant in maize and very populous. However, as Autiamque was nearer, and most of the Indians spoke of it, the Governor continued on his journey thither.

At the end of three days he came to a town called Anoixi. Having sent a captain in advance, with thirty horse and fifty foot, they came suddenly upon the inhabitants, capturing many of both sexes. On the second day afterwards, the Governor arrived at another town, called Catamaya, and slept in the adjacent fields.

Two Indians coming to him from the cacique, with the pretext of a message, in order to ascertain his business, he told them to say to their master, that he wished to speak with him; but they came no more, nor was other word returned. The next day the Spainards went to the town, which was without people, and having pilfered what maize they needed, that night they reached a wood to rest, and the day following arrived at Autiamque. (**Note** *thirty miles east of Fort Smith Arkansas.*)

They found in store much maize, also beans, walnuts, and dried plums (persimmons) in large quantities. Some Indians were captured while gathering up their clothing, having already carried away their wives. The country was level and very populous. The Governor lodged in the best portion of the town, and ordered a fence immediately to be put up about the encampment, away from the houses, that the Indians without might do no injury with fire. Measuring off the ground by pacing, he allotted to each his part to build, according to the Indians he possessed; and the timber being soon brought by them, in three days it was finished, made of very high trees sunk deep in the ground, and traversed by many pieces.

Near by passed a river of Cayas, the shores of it well peopled, both above and below the town. Indians appeared on the part of the cacique with a present of shawls and skins, and a lame chief, the lord of a town called Tietiquaquo, subject to the cacique of Autiamque, came frequently to visit the Governor, and brought him gifts of the things he possessed. The cacique sent to the Governor to inquire what length of time he would remain in his territory; and hearing that he was to be there more than three days, he sent no more messages nor Indians, but treated with the lame chief to rise in revolt. Numerous inroads were made, in which many persons of both sexes were captured, and among the rest that chief, whom the Governor, having reprehended and admonished, set at liberty, in consideration of the presents he had made, giving him two Indians to bear him away on their shoulders.

The cacique of Autiamque, desiring to drive the strangers out of his territory, ordered spies to be set about them. An Indian, coming at night to the entrance of the palisade, was noticed by a soldier on guard, who, putting himself behind the door as he entered, struck him down with a cutlass. When taken before the Governor, he was asked why he came, but fell dead without utterance. The next night the Governor sent a soldier to beat the alarm, and cry out that he saw Indians, in order to ascertain how fast the men would hasten to the call.

This was done also in other places, at times when it appeared to him they were careless, that he might reprove those who were late in coming; so that for danger, as well as for doing his duty, each one on such occasion would strive to be the first.

The Spainards stayed three months in Autiamque, enjoying the greatest plenty of maize, beans, walnuts, and dried plums (persimmons); also rabbits, which they had never had ingenuity enough to ensnare until the Indians there taught them. The contrivance is a strong spring, that lifts the animal off its feet, a noose being made of a stiff cord to run about the neck, passing through rings of cane, that it may not be gnawed. Many of them were taken in the maize-fields, usually when it was freezing or snowing. The Spainards were there a month in snow, when they did not go out of town, save to a wood, at the distance of two crossbow-shots, to which, whenever fuel was wanted, a road was opened, the Governor and others, on horseback, going to and returning from it many times, when the fuel was brought from there by those on foot. In this time many rabbits were killed with arrows by the Indians, who were now allowed to go at large in their shackles. The animal is of two sorts; one of them like that of Spain, the other of the color, form, and size of the great hare, though longer even, and having bigger loins.



CHAPTER 28

How the Governor went from Autiamque to Nilco, and thence to Guachoya.

On Monday, the sixth day of March, of the year 1542, the Governor set out from Autiamque to seek Nilco, which the Indians said was nigh the River Grande, with the purpose, by going to the sea, to recruit his forces. He had not over three hundred efficient men, nor more than forty horses. Some of the beasts were lame, and useful only in making out the show of a troop of cavalry; and, from the lack of iron, they had all gone a year without shoes, though, from the circumstance of travelling in a smooth country, they had little need of them.

Juan Ortiz died in Autiamque, a loss the Governor greatly regretted; for, without an interpreter, not knowing whither he was travelling, Soto feared to enter the country, lest he might get lost. Thenceforth a lad, captured in Cutifachiqui, who had learned somewhat of the language of the Spainards, served as the interpreter. The death was so great a hindrance to our going, whether on discovery or out of the country, that to learn of the Indians what would have been rendered in four words, it became necessary now to have the whole day: and oftener than otherwise the very opposite was understood of what was asked; so that many times it happened the road that we travelled one day, or sometimes two or three days, would have to be returned over, wandering up and down, lost in thickets.

The Governor went to a province called Ayays, arriving at a town near the river that passed by Cayas, and by Autiamque, from which he had been ten days in coming. He ordered a piragua to be built, in which he crossed; and, having arrived on the other shore, there set in such weather that marching was impossible for four days, because of snow. When that ceased to fall, he travelled three days through desert, a region so low, so full of lakes and bad passages, that at one time, for the whole day, the travel lay through water up to the knees at places, in others to the stirrups; and occasionally, for the distance of a few paces, there was swimming. And he came to Tutelpinco, a town untenanted, and found to be without maize, seated near a lake that flowed copiously into the river with a violent current. Five Spainards, in charge of a captain, in attempting to cross, by order of the Governor, were upset; when some seized hold of the canoe they had employed, others of trees that grew in the water, while one, a worthy man, Francisco Bastian, a native of Villanueva de Barcarota, became drowned.

Returning to Tutelpinco at night, the Governor found two friendly natives, who were willing to show him the crossing, and the road he was to take. From the reeds and timber of the houses, rafts and causeways were made, on which the river was crossed. After three days' marching, at Tianto, in the territory of Nilco, thirty Indians were captured, among whom were two chiefs of the town.

A captain, with infantry and cavalry, was directly despatched to Nilco, that the inhabitants might not have time to carry off their provisions. In going through three or four large towns, at the one where the cacique resided, two leagues from where the Governor stayed, many Indians were found to be in readiness, with bows and arrows, who, surrounding the place, appeared to invite an onset; but so soon as they saw the Spainards drawing nigh to them without faltering, they approached the dwelling of the cacique, setting fire to it, and, by a pond near the town, through which the horses could not go, they fled.

The following day, Wednesday, the twenty-ninth of March, the Governor arrived at Nilco, making his quarters, and those of his people, in the town of the cacique, which was in an open field, that for a quarter of a league over was all inhabited; and at the distance of from half a league to a league off were many other large towns, in which was a good quantity of maize, beans, walnuts, and dried plums (persimmons).

This was the most populous of any country that was seen in Florida, and the most abundant in maize, excepting Coça and Apalache. An Indian, attended by a party, arrived at the camp, and, presenting the Governor with a cloak of marten-skins and a string of pearls, he received some margaridetas (a kind of bead much esteemed in Peru) and other trinkets, with which he was well pleased. At leaving, he promised to be back in two days, but did not return. In the night-time, however, the Indians came in canoes, and carrying away all the maize they could take, set up their huts on the other side of the river, among the thickest bushes.

The Governor, finding that the Indians did not arrive within the time promised, ordered an ambuscade to be placed at some cribs, near the lake, to which the Indians came for maize. Two of them were captured, who told him that the person who had come to visit him was not the cacique, but one sent by him, pretending to be he, in order to observe what might be the vigilance of the Catholics, and whether it was their purpose to remain in that country, or to go farther.

Directly a captain, with men on horseback and foot, were sent over to the other shore; but, as their crossing was observed, only ten or a dozen Indians, of both sexes, could be captured; and with these the Catholics returned to camp.

This river, passing by Anilco, is the same that flows by Cayas and Autiamque, and falls into the River Grande, which flows by Pacaha and Aquixo, near the province of Guachoya, the lord of which ascended in canoes to carry war upon him of Nilco. In his behalf a messenger came to the Governor, saying that the cacique was his servant, desiring to be so considered, and that in two days from that time he would come to make his salutation.

He arrived in season, accompanied by some of his principal men, and with great proffers and courtesy, he presented many shawls and deer-skins. The Governor gave him some articles of barter, showing him much attention, and inquired what towns there might be on the river below. He replied that he knew of none other than his own; that opposite was the province of a cacique called Quigaltam; then, taking his leave, returned to his town.

The Governor determined to go to Guachoya within a few days, to learn if the sea were near, or if there were any inhabited territory nigh it, where he might find subsistence whilst those brigantines were building, that he desired to send to a country of Spainards.

As he crossed the River of Nilco, there came up Indians in canoes from Guachoya, who, when they saw him, thinking that he was in their pursuit, to do them harm, they returned down the river, and informed the cacique, when he took away from the town whatsoever his people could carry, and passed over with them, all that night, to the other bank of the River Grande.

The Governor sent a captain with fifty men, in six canoes, down the river to Guachoya; while he, with the rest, marched by land, arriving there on Sunday, the seventeenth day of April. He took up his quarters in the town of the cacique, which was palisaded, seated a crossbow-shot from the stream, that is there called the River Tamaliseu, Tapatu at Nilco, Mico at Coça, and at its entrance is known as The River.

CHAPTER 29

The message sent to Quigaltam, and the answer brought back to the Governor, and what occurred the while.

So soon as the Governor arrived in Guachoya, he ordered Juan de Añasco, with as many people as could go in the canoes, to ascend the river; for while they were coming from Anilco they saw some cabins newly built on the opposite shore. The comptroller went, and brought back the boats laden with maize, beans, dried plums (persimmons), and the pulp of them made into many loaves. The same day an Indian arrived from Guachoya, and said that the cacique would come on the morrow. The next day, many canoes were seen ascending the river; and the people in them remained for an hour on the opposite side of the River Grande, in consultation, as to whether they should come to us or not; but finally they concluded to come, and crossed the river, among them being the cacique of Guachoya with many Indians, bringing much fish, many dogs, skins, and blankets. So soon as they had landed, they went to the lodging of the Governor in the town, and having presented him with the offerings, the cacique thus spoke:

Potent and Excellent Master: I entreat you to forgive me the error I committed in going away from this town, and not waiting to greet and to obey you; since the occasion should have been for me, and is, one of pride; but I dreaded what I should not have feared, and did consequently what was out of reason; for error comes of haste, and I left without proper thought. So soon as I had reflected, I resolved not to follow the inclination of the foolish, which is to persist in his course, but to take that of the discreet and the wise: thus have I changed my purpose, coming to see in what it is you will bid me serve you, within the farthest limits of my control.

Being asked if he had any information of the sea, he said, none, save three leagues down, the province of Quigaltam, the lord of which was the greatest of that country. The Governor, suspecting that the cacique spoke untruthfully, to rid his towns of him, sent Juan de Añasco with eight of cavalry down the river, to discover what population might be there, and get what knowledge there was of the sea. He was gone eight days, and stated, when he got back, that in all that time he could not travel more than fourteen or fifteen leagues, on account of the great bogs that came out of the river, the canebrakes and thick scrubs there were along the margin, and that he had found no inhabited spot.

The Governor sank into a deep despondency at sight of the difficulties that presented themselves to his reaching the sea; and, what was worse, from the way in which the men and horses were diminishing in numbers, he could not sustain himself in the country without succor. Of that reflection he pined: but, before he took to his pallet, he sent a messenger to the cacique of Quigaltam, to say that he was the child of the Sun, and whence he came all obeyed him, rendering their tribute; that he besought him to value his friendship, and to come where he was; that he would be rejoiced to see him; and in token of love and his obedience, he must bring him something from his country that was in most esteem there. By the same Indian, the chief returned this answer:

As to what you say of your being the son of the Sun, if you will cause him to dry up the great river, I will believe you: as to the rest, it is not my custom to visit any one, but rather all, of whom I have ever heard, have come to visit me, to serve and obey me, and pay me tribute, either voluntarily or by force. If you desire to see me, come where I am; if for peace, I will receive you with special good-will; if for war, I will await you in my town; but neither for you, nor for any man, will I set back one foot.

When the messenger returned, the Governor was already low, being very ill of fevers. He grieved that he was not in a state to cross the river at once, and go in quest of the cacique, to see if he could not abate that pride; though the stream was already flowing very powerfully, was nearly half a league broad, sixteen fathoms in depth, rushing by in furious torrent, and on either shore were many Indians; nor was his power any longer so great that he might disregard advantages, relying on his strength alone.

Every day the Indians of Guachoya brought fish, until they came to be in such plenty that the town was covered with them.

The Governor having been told by the cacique, that on a certain night, the chief of Quigaltam would come to give him battle, he suspected it to be a fiction of his devising to get him out of his country, and he ordered him to be put under guard, and from that night forth the watch to be well kept. When asked why the chief did not come, he said that he had, but that, finding the Governor in readiness, he dared not adventure; and he greatly importuned him to send the captains over the river, offering to supply many men to go upon Quigaltam.

To which the Governor said, that so soon as he got well he would himself go to seek that cacique. Observing how many Indians came every day to the town, and how populous was that country, the Governor fearing that they would plot together, and practise on him some perfidy, he permitted the gates in use, and some gaps in the palisade that had not yet been closed up, to remain open, that the Indians might not suppose he stood in fear, ordering the cavalry to be distributed there; and the night long they made the round, from each squadron going mounted men in couples to visit the scouts, outside the town, at points in the roads, and to the crossbowmen that guarded the canoes in the river.

That the Indians might stand in terror of them, the Governor determined to send a captain to Nilco, which the people of Guachoya had told him was inhabited, and, treating the inhabitants there severely neither town would dare to attack him: so he commanded Captain Nuño de Tobar to march thither with fifteen horsemen, and Captain Juan de Guzman, with his company of foot, to ascend the river by water in canoes.

The cacique of Guachoya ordered canoes to be brought, and many warriors to come, who went with the Catholics. Two leagues from Nilco, the cavalry, having first arrived, waited for the foot, and thence together they crossed the river in the night. At dawn, in sight of the town, they came upon a scout, who, directly as he saw the Spainards, set up loud yells, and fled to carry the news to those in the place. Nuño de Tobar, and those with him, hastened on so rapidly, that they were upon the inhabitants before they could all get out of town.

The ground was open field; the part of it covered by the houses, which might be a quarter of a league in extent, contained five or six thousand souls. Coming out of them, the Indians ran from one to another habitation, numbers collecting in all parts, so that there was not a man on horseback who did not find himself amidst many; and when the captain ordered that the life of no male should be spared, the surprise was such, that there was not a man among them in readiness to draw a bow.

The cries of the women and children were such as to deafen those who pursued them. About one hundred men were slain; many were allowed to get away badly wounded, that they might strike terror into those who were absent.

Some Catholics were so cruel and butcher-like that they killed all before them, young and old, not one having resisted little nor much; while those who felt it their duty to be wherever there might be resistance, and were esteemed brave, broke through the crowds of Indians, pushing down many with their stirrups and the breasts of their horses, giving some a lance thrust and letting them go, but encountering a child or a woman would take and deliver it over to the footmen. To the ferocious and bloodthirsty Catholics, God permitted that their sin should rise up against them in the presence of all—when there was occasion for fighting showing extreme cowardice, and in the end paying for it with their lives.

Eighty women and children were captured at Nilco, and much clothing. The Indians of Guachoya, before arriving at the town, had come to a stop, and from without watched the success of the Catholics over the inhabitants; and when they saw that these were scattered, that the cavalry were following and lancing them, they went to the houses for plunder, filling the canoes with clothing; and lest the Spainards might take away what they got, they returned to Guachoya, where they came greatly astonished at what they had seen done to the people of Nilco, which they, in great fear, recounted circumstantially to their cacique.

CHAPTER 30

The death of the Adelantado, Don Hernando de Soto, and how Luys Moscoso de Alvarado was chosen Governor.

The Governor, conscious that the hour approached in which he should depart this life, commanded that all the King's officers should be called before him, the captains and the principal personages, to whom he made a speech. He said that he was about to go into the presence of God, to give account of all his past life; and since He had been pleased to take him away at such a time, and when he could recognize the moment of his death, he, His most unworthy servant, rendered Him hearty thanks. He confessed his deep obligations to them all, whether present or absent, for their great qualities, their love and loyalty to his person, well tried in the sufferance of hardship, which he ever wished to honor, and had designed to reward, when the Almighty should be pleased to give him repose from labor with greater prosperity to his fortune. He begged that they would pray for him, that through mercy he might be pardoned his sins, and his soul be received in glory: he asked that they would relieve him of the charge he held over them, as well of the indebtedness he was under to them all, as to forgive him any wrongs they might have received at his hands. To prevent any divisions that might arise, as to who should command, he asked that they would be pleased to elect a principal and able person to be governor, one with whom they should all be satisfied, and, being chosen, they would swear before him to obey: that this would greatly satisfy him, abate somewhat the pains he suffered, and moderate the anxiety of leaving them in a country, they knew not where.

Baltasar de Gallegos responded in behalf of all, consoling him with remarks on the shortness of the life of this world, attended as it was by so many toils and afflictions, saying that whom God earliest called away, He showed particular favor; with many other things appropriate to such an occasion: And finally, since it pleased the Almighty to take him to Himself, amid the deep sorrow they not unreasonably felt, it was necessary and becoming in him, as in them, to conform to the Divine Will: that as respected the election of a governor, which he ordered, whomsoever his Excellency should name to the command, him would they obey. Thereupon the Governor nominated Luys Moscoso de Alvarado to be his captain-general; when by all those present was he straightway chosen and sworn Governor.

The next day, the twenty-first of May, departed this life the magnanimous, the virtuous, the intrepid captain, Don Hernando de Soto, Governor of Cuba and Adelantado of Florida. He was advanced by fortune, in the way she is wont to lead others, that he might fall the greater depth: he died in a land, and at a time, that could afford him little comfort in his illness, when the danger of being no more heard from stared his companions in the face, each one himself having need of sympathy, which was the cause why they neither gave him their companionship nor visited him, as otherwise they would have done.

Luys de Moscoso determined to conceal what had happened from the Indians; for de Soto had given them to understand that the Catholics were immortal; besides, they held him to be vigilant, sagacious, brave; and, although they were at peace, should they know him to be dead, they, being of their nature inconstant, might venture on making an attack; and they were credulous of all that he had told them, for he made them believe that some things which went on among them privately, he had discovered without their being able to see how, or by what means; and that the figure which appeared in a mirror he showed, told him whatsoever they might be about, or desired to do; whence neither by word nor deed did they dare undertake any thing to his injury.

So soon as the death had taken place, Luys de Moscoso directed the body to be put secretly into a house, where it remained three days; and thence it was taken at night, by his order, to a gate of the town, and buried within. The Indians, who had seen him ill, finding him no longer, suspected the reason; and passing by where he lay, they observed the ground loose, and, looking about, talked among themselves. This coming to the knowledge of Luys de Moscoso, he ordered the corpse to be taken up at night, and among the shawls that enshrouded it having cast abundance of sand, it was taken out in a canoe and committed to the middle of the stream. The cacique of Guachoya asked for him, saying: "What has been done with my brother and lord, the Governor?" Luys de Moscoso told him that he had ascended into the skies, as he had done on many other occasions; but as he would have to be detained there some time, he had left him in his stead. The chief, thinking within himself that he was dead, ordered two well-proportioned young men to be brought, saying, that it was the usage of the country, when any lord died, to kill some persons, who should accompany and serve him on the way, on which account they were brought; and he told him to command their heads to be struck off, that they might go accordingly to attend his friend and master. Luys de Moscoso replied to him, that the Governor was not dead, but only gone into the heavens, having taken with him of his soldiers sufficient number for his need, and

he besought him to let those Indians go, and from that time forward not to follow so evil a practice. They were presently ordered to be let loose, that they might return to their houses; but one of them refused to leave, alleging that he did not wish to remain in the power of one who, without cause, condemned him to die, and that he who had saved his life he desired to serve as long as he should live.

Luys de Moscoso ordered the property of the Governor to be sold at public outcry. It consisted of two male and three female slaves, three horses, and seven hundred swine. For each slave, or horse, was given two or three thousand cruzados, to be paid at the first melting of gold or silver, or division of vassals and territory, with the obligation that should there be nothing found in the country, the payment should be made at the end of a year, those having no property to pledge to give their bond. A hog bought in the same way, trusted, two hundred cruzados. Those who had left anything at home bought more sparingly, and took less than others. From that time forward most of the people owned and raised hogs; they lived on pork, observed Fridays and Saturdays, and the vespers of holidays, which they had not done before; for, at times, they had passed two or three months without tasting any meat, and on the day they got any, it had been their custom to eat it.



Burial of Hernando de Soto in the Mississippi River

CONCLUSION

Hernando de Soto's expedition had explored La Florida for three years without finding the expected treasures or a hospitable site for colonization. They had lost nearly half their men, and most of the horses. By this time, the soldiers were wearing animal skins for clothing. Many were injured and in poor health. The leaders came to a consensus to end the expedition and try to find a way home, either down the Mississippi River, or overland across Texas to the Spanish colony of Mexico City.

They decided that building boats would be too difficult and time-consuming, and that navigating the Gulf of Mexico was too risky, so they headed overland to the southwest. Eventually they reached a region in present-day Texas that was dry. The native populations were made up mostly of subsistence hunter-gatherers. The soldiers found no villages to raid for food, and the army was still too large to live off the land. They were forced to backtrack to the more developed agricultural regions along the Mississippi, where they began building seven bergantines, or pinnaces. They melted down all the iron, including horse tackle and slave shackles, to make nails for the boats. They survived through the winter, and the spring floods delayed them another two months. By July they set off on their makeshift boats down the Mississippi for the coast.

Taking about two weeks to make the journey, the expedition encountered hostile fleets of war canoes along the whole course. The first was led by the powerful paramount chief Quigualtam, whose fleet followed the boats, shooting arrows at the soldiers for days on end as they drifted through their territory. The Spanish had no effective offensive weapons on the water, as their crossbows had long ceased working. They relied on armor and sleeping mats to block the arrows. About 11 Spaniards were killed along this stretch and many more wounded.

On reaching the mouth of the Mississippi, they stayed close to the Gulf shore heading south and west. After about 50 days, they made it to the Pánuco River and the Spanish frontier town of Pánuco. There they rested for about a month. During this time many of the Spaniards, having safely returned and reflecting on their accomplishments, decided they had left La Florida too soon. There were some fights within the company, leading to some deaths. But, after they reached Mexico City and Viceroy Don Antonio de Mendoza offered to lead another expedition to La Florida, few of the survivors volunteered. Of the recorded 700 participants at the start, between 300 and 350 survived (311 is a commonly accepted figure). Most of the men stayed in the New World, settling in Mexico, Peru, Cuba, and other Spanish colonies.

About the Author

Larry W Jones is a songwriter, having penned over 7,700 song lyrics. Published in 22 volumes of island themed, country, cowboy, western and bluegrass songs. The entire assemblage is the world's largest collection of lyrics written by an individual songwriter.

As a wrangler on the “Great American Horse Drive”, at age 68, he assisted in driving 800 half-wild horses 62 miles in two days, from Winter pasture grounds in far NW Colorado to the Big Gulch Ranch outside of Craig Colorado.

His book, “The Oldest Greenhorn”, chronicles the adventures and perils in earning the “Gate-to-Gate” trophy belt buckle the hard way.



Other books published by Larry W Jones:

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